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WEEKEND EDITION EUROPE & PACIFIC



VIDEO GAMES

The pleasures and pitfalls of 'Halo: Master Chief Collection'
Page 26



TRAVEL: EUROPE



Vicenza museums offer respite from winter doldrums

Page 28

TRAVEL: PACIFIC



Christmas market is a Little Bavaria in central Tokyo

Page 34

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Army vs. Navy is more than a rivalry

Back page





Super saver

Congress gives commissaries a last-minute reprieve

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Base commissaries are set to dodge budget cuts next year that threatened to reduce shopper savings thanks to a massive omnibus spending bill set for a vote in Congress this week.

The bill would pump \$90 million back into the global system of supermarkets after lawmakers proposed trimming about \$100 million from the commissary budget, according to Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., who helped craft it.

Commissary savings may be the only troop benefit on the chopping block to get a last-minute reprieve in the \$1.1 trillion omnibus bill — Congress is still poised to reduce military pay raises, housing allowances and Tri-care prescription coverage. It would also eliminate on-base tobacco discounts in 2015.

The spending bill was likely to be approved during a House vote Thursday and a Senate vote Friday, heading off a possible government shutdown as current funding legislation expires, Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., who headed up the compromise, said Wednesday afternoon.

It will ensure troops, families and military retirees can continue to save what the commissary system says is an average of 30 percent on grocery bills by shopping at the 243 supermarkets on bases in the United States and abroad.

SEE COMMISSARIES ON PAGE 6

Senate panel votes to limit use of troops in Iraq, Syria

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Senate panel approved a war powers bill Thursday limiting the Obama administration's ability to use ground troops against the Islamic State.

Senators on the Foreign Relations Committee who pushed to impose limits on military operations in Iraq and Syria said they feared another open-ended conflict following 13 years of post-9/11 war. But many — mostly Republicans — said ruling out such forces may hinder the nation's ability to defeat the extremists.

The bill is likely to die as Congress prepares to end its session this week. But the 10-8 vote was the first indication of how lawmakers may eventually weigh in on a new authorization for the use of military force, which many on Capitol Hill believe is necessary.

"Let's be honest, I don't think we would have gotten anybody to crystallize their ideas ... unless we started this process," said committee chairman Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J.

The bill would prohibit President Barack Obama from deploying large-scale ground forces for combat but makes some exceptions. The troops could be sent in to rescue Americans, collect intelligence, direct airstrikes and conduct operations planning.

"The massive deployment of ground forces in the Middle East ends up creating more enemies than it ends up killing," said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn. "I think that is an outright, take-it-to-the-bank lesson from over the past 10 years."

The authority of the president to wage war would also expire after three years, meaning that Congress would be required to revisit the conflict following the election of the next president.

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., tried to insert an amendment limiting the war to within the geographic boundaries of Iraq and Syria, but the measure failed.

The bill would allow strikes against the Islamic State and associated groups, and Paul noted it could be interpreted as an authorization to strike at as many as 60 radical groups in 30 nations.

SEE TROOPS ON PAGE 10

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Think of it as 'God on the go,' We have drive-thru food and drive-thru coffee in our society. This is drive-thru prayer."

—The Rev. Matthew Vellankal, of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Fremont, Calif.

See story on Page 20

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5. Accuracy questioned in JPAC identification of WWII remains from Philippines

COMING SOON



Shifting Gears

2015 Ford Mustang runs laps around American competitors

TODAY IN STRIPES

American Roundup	48
Business	51
Classified	50, 52-53
Comics	42, 46-47
Crossword	42, 46-47
Faces	43
Faith	20
Opinion	44-45
Sports	54-64
Weather	51
Weekend	21-42

MILITARY



RICK VASQUEZ/Stars and Stripes

Experts on homelessness and veterans testify Thursday on Capitol Hill. From left are Baylee Crone, executive director at the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans; Steven Berg, vice president for programs and policy, National Alliance to End Homelessness; John Downing, chief executive officer at Soldier On; Phil Landis, president and CEO of Veterans Village; Casey O'Donnell, chief operating officer, Impact Services Corp.; and Dr. Jon Sherin, executive vice president for military communities and chief medical officer, Volunteers of America.

Veteran homelessness declining

By JENNIFER HLAD
Stars and Stripes

Veteran homelessness has been reduced 33 percent since 2009, but there is still a long way to go before the U.S. reaches "functional zero," congressmen and veteran service providers said Thursday in a hearing on Capitol Hill.

In November 2009, President Barack Obama and then-Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki set the ambitious goal of ending homelessness among veterans "within five years." Since then, the stated deadline has shifted from the beginning of 2015 to the end of 2015, even as the VA and groups across the country worked to quickly implement Shinseki's comprehensive plan.

A VA inspector general report released last week shows the effort has not been flawless. The VA's National Call Center for Homeless Veterans missed more than 40,000 opportunities to engage with veterans because of calls going to recordings during

peak hours.

Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, said the findings would be unacceptable for any government program, but is particularly problematic for a population that faces significant challenges just to make a phone call.

The call center is not Miller's only concern. He questioned the wisdom of having more than 20 programs "designed to get homeless veterans off the streets and provide them with housing, health care and employment assistance," in addition to similar programs through the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Labor.

But Baylee Crone, executive director for the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, said homeless veterans are not homogenous—they have individual needs.

Some of those needs are being served by multiple programs, Crone said, but that doesn't mean the programs are being

duplicated.

As the VA has worked to end veteran homelessness, the main focus has been getting veterans off the streets, the leaders of veteran service organizations said. But a significant number of homeless vets have severe mental health, substance abuse or other issues and, for them, housing without treatment is dangerous, said Phil Landis, president and CEO of Veterans Village of San Diego.

Landis said the "housing first" model is "an admirable and reasonable idea for many veterans," but that treatment programs and transitional housing must remain available for those who need it.

Several veterans who were placed in HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing too soon have relapsed and gone to prison, Landis said. And one 27-year-old veteran who was doing well in a long-term residential treatment program was forced out after he received a 100 percent disability rating from the VA, putting him above the income cap.

About 25 percent of veterans may never get to the point where they can live balanced, self-sustaining lives in permanent housing without ongoing care, the advocates said.

Ending veteran homelessness "is not a moment; it's a moving target," Crone said, and as the number of veterans on the streets declines, organizations must be even more diligent to continue the momentum, prevent future homelessness and ensure that needs are met.

Some advocates said homelessness will never be eradicated, but Casey O'Donnell said "functional zero" — enough housing and treatment programs for all veterans who need them — is possible. O'Donnell is with Impact Services Corp., a jobs, housing and economic development group in Philadelphia. He expects the city to make that goal by the beginning of 2016.

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MILITARY

New cyberspace unit seeks running start

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The fledgling U.S. Cyber Command is trying to hit the ground running, aware that it's playing catch-up with often-archaic equipment, dealing with constantly evolving threats and trying to justify its existence amid budget cuts and force reductions.

The cyberforce is expected to be fully in place by the end of 2016 with a staff of 6,000, said Lt. Gen. James McLaughlin, deputy commander of U.S. Cyber Command. Roughly 2,400 have been hired since fiscal 2013 began, and they are now in teams that have at least "initial operating capability," McLaughlin said Wednesday at the annual TechNet Pacific conference.

"That's something that's in play right now," he said.

McLaughlin said the Cyber Mis-

sion Force was being formed into 133 teams.

"They're basically tactical units," he said.

He said he couldn't provide much detail about where the teams will be placed, but said half would be used for defensive measures. At least part of the other half presumably will focus on offensive measures in the cyberspace realm.

"A few of the combatant commands — based on just the scope of responsibility and base of operation — have more of the teams than others, but every combatant command is being supported," he said.

"We're just beginning to have



McLaughlin

these teams formed," he said. As each team is established, representatives of combatant commands have met with U.S. Cyber Command and set a short list of priorities, he said.

U.S. Cyber Command treats cyberspace as a warfare domain in the way the services regard the air, the sea and the land.

"The real challenge for some of the teams is because of the infancy of the domain," McLaughlin said.

He compared creating these fledgling cyberspace teams to building an F-22 fighter jet squadron.

"They've been checked out on the F-22, and they'd shown up at their unit, and the whole unit is mainly new lieutenants who'd just been checked out on the F-22," he said. Their commander hadn't "grown up as an offensive fighter," nor had the unit been trained as an entity and certified to go

into combat, as normally would be done with such a squadron.

"He didn't have a training environment where they train every day so that you could certify individuals, certain elements of the team and the entire squadron," he said. "Those things don't exist yet in cyber, but we're creating it as fast as we can."

U.S. Cyber Command is looking to hire more people to fill those higher-level gaps.

"We need additional people to work the command and control, those intermediate-level set of tasks either in our combatant commands or in our service components that really translates senior commander intent into plans and then into operations that the lead commander can then control," he said.

The command's domain includes the vast array of linked computer systems within the Defense Department, parts of which

are arcane, archaic and exposed.

When a cyber threat is announced, it can take weeks for technicians to even determine what parts of the network are running software that's vulnerable.

"We don't have weeks," he said. "A lot of what we're doing today is reacting to what happened, so we spend a lot of time chasing our tails in the Cyber Command."

He said the command's goal is to get ahead of such threats, perhaps through the analysis of big data from the network that will reveal anomalies to prevent outside incursions before they happen.

McLaughlin acknowledged that pressure is on the Cyber Command to justify its hiring binge and increased budget at a time when most other areas in the Defense Department have dealt with cutbacks.

"This is the year of 'prove it,'" he said.

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Courtesy of Bell Helicopter

A V-22 Osprey successfully test-fired forward-firing rockets and missiles last month in Yuma, Ariz.

Forward-firing tests on the V-22 Osprey are successful

Stars and Stripes

The makers of the V-22 Osprey have successfully tested forward-firing rockets and missiles on the helicopter/airplane hybrid, officials said this week.

The testing was performed during an exercise in November at the U.S. Army Proving Ground in Yuma, Ariz., according to a statement Monday from Bell Helicopter, which began initial designs in mid-2013.

Forward-firing capabilities have long been discussed as a necessity for the tilt-rotor aircraft, which has been increasingly relied upon during humanitarian and combat operations in recent years. Three CV-22 Osprey came under fire a year ago during an evacuation mission in southern Sudan, leading to the injuries of four servicemembers.

"The forward-firing demonstration was a great success,"

Vince Tobin, vice president and program manager for the Bell Boeing V-22, said in the statement.

"We've shown the V-22 can be armed with a variety of forward-facing munitions, and can hit their targets with a high degree of reliability."

Adding the weapons will increase the aircraft's mission set, Tobin said.

Bell Boeing has delivered 242 MV-22 Ospreys to the Marine Corps and 44 CV-22s to the Air Force Special Operations Command through the end of the third quarter of 2014, the statement said.

The aircraft has been a focal point of protests on Okinawa in southern Japan despite positive reviews by pilots.

Japan plans to begin procurement of its own Osprey fleet next year.

AF secretary backs end of transgender ban

By SUSAN PAGE
USA Today

ARLINGTON, Va. — Now that the U.S. military has opened more jobs to women and allowed gay men and lesbians to serve openly, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James says the ban on transgender troops is likely to be reassessed and should be lifted.

"Times change," she told Capital Download, saying the policy "is likely to come under review in the next year or so." Asked whether dropping the ban would affect military readiness, she replied, "From my point of view, anyone who is capable of accomplishing the job should be able to serve."

In a wide-ranging interview at the Pentagon, James also described progress in the bombing campaign against the Islamic State and said the U.S.-led military coalition has gotten help from unlikely sources.

The Pentagon last week confirmed Tehran has conducted airstrikes against Islamic State targets in eastern Iraq, creating a de facto alliance with the United States despite the lack of formal relations between the two long-time adversaries.

"There has been no coordination between the U.S. and coalition effort on the one hand and the work of the Iranians on the other," she said. "I would have to

say, however, to the degree that Iranian efforts are helping to degrade or destroy ISIL in some way, that can't help but be helpful to the overall effort," she said, referring to the group by one of several common acronyms.

James, 56, a former House staffer and executive in the national security industry, was direct and blunt-spoken Tuesday in USA Today's weekly video newsmaker series. The hallway outside her office is lined with portraits of her 22 predecessors, all but one of them male.

She apparently is the first secretary of a branch of the armed forces to support the idea of ending the ban on transgender troops, though House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, of California, and some other members of Congress have urged the Pentagon to lift it.

The Williams Institute, a think tank based at UCLA, has estimated that about 15,500 transgender people are now serving in the U.S. military. Supporters of the prohibition say allowing transgender troops would create complications on issues from housing to health care.

The Air Force has been leading the battle against the Islamic State, a military campaign that wasn't on the horizon when James was sworn in almost exactly a year ago.

"The very fact that we have

this campaign at this moment is a surprise. I think most Americans would agree," she said. "We did believe that we would have a bit of a strategic pause in the Middle East as we wound down the combat operation in Afghanistan."

Still, "very solid progress" is being made, she said.

"On the ground, of course ISIS isn't waving that flag around quite so openly anymore, so our efforts have succeeded in getting them to change their tactics, their techniques. They're going much more underground," she said. But, she cautioned, "We need to have strategic patience because this will be a long ball. This will be a fight which will likely take years."

James worked for a decade for House Armed Services Chairman Les Aspin, D-Wis., who became a secretary of defense in the Clinton administration.

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MILITARY

Doubts rise on identification of WWII remains

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

As the Defense Department attempts to identify World War II remains exhumed in the Philippines August, questions have surfaced about the identification years ago of four sets of remains that were returned to families and buried.

The revelations are the latest in the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command effort to identify 14 servicemembers and Navy employees who died at the hands of Japanese captors on Nov. 19, 1942, at the Cabanatuan prisoner of war camp in Luzon and were buried in communal grave 717.

After the war, remains of four of the men in that grave were allegedly identified and were sent home to their families. What were thought to be the remains of 10 others were moved to the Manila American Cemetery and were buried as unknowns.

Following a lawsuit by one of the families of the unknown men, their remains were exhumed and samples were sent to the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, or AFDIL, for DNA testing.

Documents obtained by Stars and Stripes show that in the past five years, three accounting officials believed that the four identifications made after the war were incorrect, which would hamper current attempts to identify the others.

Documents released last month in district court in Texas revealed that the remains of 11 people were found in the 10 exhumed caskets, and that accounting personnel are unable to provide "reportable results" on all of the samples sent to the AFDIL, although testing is ongoing.

The AFDIL's mitochondrial DNA testing — using DNA from maternal lineage — "supports the indication of a minimum of 11 individuals in the assemblage," according to a status report obtained by Stars and Stripes.

From among the 149 bone and tooth samples, DNA had been ex-

'They'll send them back to Manila and bury them again. I hate to think the worst of anyone, but these people have demonstrated no regard for the truth.'

John Eakin
cousin of WWII servicemember who is unaccounted for

tracted "at least once and, when possible, two or more times," the report said. Yet of the 10 samples provided to the AFDIL by the JPAC laboratory, four did not yield solid results.

"The remaining four samples of the original 10 have been extracted multiple times and have been determined to be not reportable at this time," the report said. Families of the missing believe that the unreportable results could be attributed to incorrect IDs made after the war.

Officials from the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office declined to comment due to the ongoing litigation.

The report also states that the agencies do not have all of the family reference samples to make the identifications, and that nuclear DNA inherited from both parents, which has been heralded as a superior testing method by experts, has not been used.

The disclosures of extra body parts and shaky identifications leave the Defense Department's accounting agencies in a quandary. Will they repatriate the extra portion of remains with an already "identified" buried owner or dispose of it?

After the war, it had been standard practice to bury portions of remains in caskets marked as unknowns, even in cases in which evidence pointed to an already identified and buried owner. In recent years, extra portions were cremated and disposed of in a landfill. However, that practice was stopped after public backlash. Portions of remains are now cremated and buried at sea.

It is unknown whether there

are plans to exhume the four sets of already identified remains, but the move has been recommended by accounting personnel.

"The previous 4 identifications may have been premature," anthropologist Debra Prince Zinni wrote to Tom Holland, JPAC scientific director and deputy to the commander for Central Identification Laboratory operations, in an Oct. 19, 2011, memo. Family reference samples for the four identified cases "must also be collected prior to disinterment."

The Zinni memo followed a similar one a year earlier by Heather Harris that cast a shadow on the identifications.

■The remains turned over to the family of Pfc. Daniel Bain were done so primarily because of an ID tag, which is often unreliable.

■Pfc. Juan Gutierrez was identified by two officers from the Dental Corps even though "no dental forms were available for comparison," Harris wrote, citing his 1946, "Report of Interment."

■Sgt. Lawrence Hanscom was identified based on the comparison of multiple dental extractions

and restorations. However, the memo states that matching up the charts was a challenge because problematic teeth were often pulled during imprisonment and malnutrition the men experienced caused tooth loss.

No height, age or race could be determined for comparison.

■The remains identified as Pfc. Harvey Nichols showed a restoration in the teeth where none was listed in his records. "More troubling is the lack of restorations on teeth shown to have restorations present in PFC Nichols' records," Harris wrote. The remains were also estimated to be 4 or 5 inches shorter than Nichols, Harris wrote.

"The possibility that the resolved casualties were misidentified cannot be excluded," said former JPAC investigator Rick Stone, quoting a report he drafted on the four sets of remains on behalf of JPAC's deputy to the commander for external relations and legislative affairs Johnnie Webb.

Stone declined to provide copies to Stars and Stripes because they were labeled "for official use only."

John Eakin, cousin of one of the unknowns, filed suit against the government demanding a timely identification on behalf of the Kelder family. Pvt. Arthur "Bud" Kelder is one of 73,652 servicemembers unaccounted for from the war. His family believes Kelder was one of the more than 8,500 American servicemembers from World War II buried as an unknown in American cemeter-

ies around the world. He, other families and JPAC whistleblowers believe that more can be done to identify remains, but claim the defense accounting agencies have refused.

Eakin said he understood why JPAC was reluctant to exhumate the remains and to attempt to make the IDs. Identifications from previous conflicts, before DNA testing, could become suspect.

"It confirms the research memos and investigative reports" that the IDs made after the war were incorrect, he said.

Eakin fears the accounting agencies will refrain from disturbing the four families of the previously identified remains, and will instead dispose of the 11th set of remains and place the four unreportable cases back into unknown graves.

"They'll send them back to Manila and bury them again," Eakin said. "I hate to think the worst of anyone, but these people have demonstrated no regard for the truth."

Despite the questionable identifications, Zinni believes the remains could be identified using modern technology.

"Although the remains are described as eroded and lacking identifiable characteristics, advances in technology ... may help in identification of remains from Common Grave 717," she wrote.

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Police: Officer in Marines admits role in hit-and-run

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND CHIYOMI SUMIDA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Okinawa police say a Marine Corps major assigned to Camp Courtney admitted his involvement in a hit-and-run accident that left a 67-year-old man unconscious in Okinawa city.

Maj. John Jeonhooon Ahn, 40, was identified by prefectural police Wednesday as the driver who struck a moped from behind on Highway 75 north about 5 a.m. on Dec. 4.

Police said Ahn was traveling to work from his home on Camp Kinser. They matched a side mir-

ror found at the scene to Ahn's car. Police said he later confessed, telling them that he fled out of fear.

Police officials said there was no indication of alcohol involvement.

The driver of the moped, Seiki Kamimura, of Okinawa city, remained unconscious in a local hospital Thursday, police said. They have yet to refer the case to the Naha public prosecutor's office.

Ahn is in U.S. military custody pending charges, police said. Marine Corps officials did not immediately respond to requests seeking comment.

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MILITARY

Congress rejects DOD proposals to cut costs

By TOM PHILPOTT

House and Senate conferees negotiating a package to fund the Department of Defense through September 2015 have protected commissary operations by restoring 90 percent of a planned \$100 million cut.

Once again, lawmakers thwarted a cost-saving initiative targeting military compensation and endorsed by the Joint Chiefs as a way to dampen personnel costs so more dollars can be spent on training, weapon purchases and other readiness accounts victimized by arbitrary "sequestration" cuts.

Only last week, House and Senate conferees on a different bill, the 2015 Defense Authorization Act, unveiled a deal to lower the Defense Commissary Agency's annual \$1.3 billion budget to \$1.2 billion. DeCA said it could absorb the knock without affecting customer savings or services.

The military resale industry challenged that notion, saying a cut of more than 7 percent inevitably would affect staffing and store hours.

This week, conferees shaping a final defense appropriations bill that is part of a massive spending package for the entire federal government restored \$90 million of the commissary budget cut in the authorization bill.

"This essential funding ensures that DeCA ... will continue delivering a core benefit of military compensation," said Patrick Nixon, president of the American Logistics Association, which represents manufacturers and vendors of products sold in military stores.

MILITARY UPDATE

In rejecting almost every Defense Department proposal this year to hold down personnel costs, lawmakers said time after time that these changes should await the final report of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, due in February. Appropriators echoed that point in restoring commissary funding.

■ **COLA minus 1 percent.** The plea to "wait for the commission" was used again in the authorization bill to delay adoption of a COLA-minus-1 percent formula aimed at dampening retirement costs of future members.

Congress last year replaced the pearl of full cost-of-living adjustments in retirement for members who entered service on or after Jan. 1, 2014.

Their COLAs, 20 years hence, were to be set a percentage point below annual inflation.

The new bill moves the date of that change to affect only members entering on or after Jan. 1, 2016, giving Congress time to meld this idea with commission recommendations for reshaping future retirement.

Thousands of career-minded personnel who first entered service after Jan. 1 last year just dodged a bullet that would have devalued their retirement benefits significantly.

■ **Tobacco prices rising.** The authorization bill blocks any attempt to ban sale of tobacco prod-

ucts on base but also narrows the price discounts.

Cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco are not to be sold on base at prices lower than the most competitive prices in the local community.

Affected will be Army and Air Force exchanges and commissaries where tobacco products still can be sold 5 percent below the most competitive prices off base.

In 2012, the Navy Department ordered Navy and Marine Corps stores to raise tobacco prices to match competitive local prices.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus earlier this year floated the idea of pulling all tobacco products from exchanges, commissaries and ship stores.

That led House Republicans to insert bill language to block such a move.

But in a deal cut with Senate conferees last week, the bill also declares that on-base tobacco prices cannot be set lower than the most competitive price off base.

About 25 percent of military folks say they smoke, a rate higher than found among civilian peers.

Studies blame that in part on tobacco discounts.

Critics also find the 5 percent rule ineffective, arguing that discounts at Army and Air Force stores actually average about 20 percent when price comparisons include all retail tobacco outlets.

The Defense Department estimates it spends \$1.6 billion per year on tobacco-related medical care.

It is committed to lowering tobacco usage sharply by 2024.

The new defense policy bill also amends the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act to help protect servicemembers from losing custody of children over deployment.

On-base tobacco sales, however, totaled \$711.4 million in 2012 and generated profits of \$125.7 million.

That's money the military plows back into its morale, welfare and recreation programs.

■ **Child custody protection.** The new defense policy bill also amends the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act to help protect servicemembers from losing custody of children due solely to military deployment.

Rep. Mike Turner, R-Ohio, has fought for this for almost a decade, facing stiff opposition from family advocates, lawyers and defense officials who say his bill is a solution in search of a problem.

They argue it won't help anyone and could confuse military families and drive up their litigation costs.

The bill modifies the SCRA to say unequivocally that state courts must not use current or future deployments as a sole reason to deny members child custody.

It also says the length of a temporary custody order when a custodial parent deployed should be for a period justified by the deployment, not longer.

Attorney Mark E. Sullivan, an Army retiree and family law expert who wrote the military child-custody law for North Car-

olina, said neither he nor Turner nor the Department of Defense could identify a single case in which a member in a child custody fight would be protected by this change to SCRA.

So, Sullivan asked, "Why put a law on the books that isn't needed and can only cause problems?"

Past defense secretaries opposed the bill on advice of family law experts who said it needlessly would create a right of federal court review in custody cases, driving up legal costs for families, bringing custody disputes before judges having little family law experience and tipping outcomes in favor of servicemembers over the interests of children.

After Turner briefed Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, the department dropped its opposition.

The language also was modified to make clear that federal courts still have no right of action in child custody matters.

"We think this is still unnecessary and potentially harmful," said Joyce Wessel Raezer, executive director of the National Military Family Association, with language added that could "confuse both servicemembers and judges."

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 23111, Centreville, VA, 20129; email milupdate@aol.com; or twitter: Tom Philpott @Military_Update.

Commissaries: DOD aims to close stores, lower savings

FROM FRONT PAGE

Durbin's office said the funding was granted while Congress and the Defense Department await a commission study on military benefits expected to be finished in February and to become a guideline for future reforms.

The stores cost the DOD \$1.4 billion per year. The Pentagon wants to reduce that annual budget to just \$400 million, to close some locations and eventually to bring savings down to about 10 percent.

Top brass lobbied Capitol Hill earlier this year to start with a \$200 million reduction next year. Congress had met the Pentagon halfway by reducing commissary funding by \$100 million in its National Defense Authorization Act, an annual bill that sets defense priorities and is also up for a final vote in the Senate this week. Lawmakers anticipated the supermarkets could suck up the

cut by being more efficient.

The omnibus bill restored enough money to keep operations at current levels, according to Senate staff involved with creating the legislation.

Meanwhile, the omnibus and the NDAA will push forward with other cuts in troop benefits.

Pay raises will be capped at 1 percent, down from 1.8 percent increases. Basic housing allowances will go from covering 100 percent to 99 percent of costs, while the military wants to bring that down eventually to 95 percent.

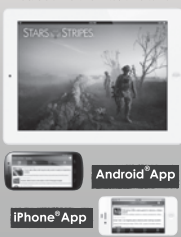
Troops also will be asked to pay \$3 more out of pocket for Tricare pharmacy copayments and will no longer be able to buy cheaper cigarettes and smokeless tobacco on military bases, meaning troops will have to pay about 5 percent to 20 percent more, depending on the location.

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EUROPE



German third- and fourth-graders and U.S. soldiers sing carols to senior living home residents on Thursday.

Troops, students spread holiday cheer with carols

By MATT MILLHAM
Stars and Stripes

See more photos
of the caroling event at
stripes.com/go/cheer

BAUMHOLDER, Germany — U.S. soldiers joined up with dozens of German elementary school students to sing carols to elderly and sick residents at a hospital and senior living facility here Thursday.

For the past 15 months, the Army's single soldiers program at Smith Barracks has been working with third- and fourth-grade classes at the Grundschule Götttschied in Idar-Oberstein, offering instruction in the English language and teaching about American holidays and traditions.

One of the first events the soldiers and students did together was a caroling event last year at a home for seniors, Götttschied principal Nicole Bier said, and

they wanted to do it again.

About 45 students from her school and a dozen personnel from Baumholder's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers, or BOSS, program performed for patients and residents at a hospital and senior home adjacent to Smith Barracks.

The collaboration offers the German students the opportunity to learn English from native speakers, and it gives soldiers a way to contribute to the community off post, officials said.

"The kids love them," Bier said of the soldiers.

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PHOTOS BY MATT MILLHAM/Stars and Stripes

Soldiers from Baumholder's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program sing carols along with German elementary school children Thursday at a senior living home just outside the gate of the U.S. Army's Smith Barracks in Baumholder, Germany.



Students from the school hold up signs while singing.

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POND SECURITY SERVICE



WAR ON TERRORISM

Brennan defends CIA acts in wake of torture report

By BRADLEY KLAPPER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — CIA Director John Brennan defended his agency Thursday from accusations in a Senate report that it used inhumane interrogation techniques against terrorist suspects with no security benefits to the U.S.

Brennan opened a rare news conference by recounting the horrors of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, his agency's determination to prevent another such assault and the fact that CIA officers were the first to fight and early to die in the Afghanistan War.

He conceded unauthorized and in some cases abhorrent methods were used against captives.

But Brennan asserted the CIA "did a lot of things right" in a time when there were "no easy answers."

Brennan's remarks were part of a campaign by the CIA and several of its past leaders to discredit a five-year Senate investigation into the CIA's interrogation practices after 9/11, concerned that the historical record may define them as torturers instead of patriots and expose them to legal action around the world.

The Senate Intelligence Committee's report doesn't urge prosecution for wrongdoing, and

the Justice Department has no interest in reopening a criminal probe. But the threat to former interrogators and their superiors was underlined as a U.N. special investigator demanded those responsible for "systematic crimes" be brought to justice, and human rights groups pushed for the arrest of key CIA and Bush administration figures if they travel overseas.

Current and former CIA officials responded Wednesday, determined to paint the Senate report as a political stunt by Senate Democrats tarnishing a program that saved American lives. It is a "one-sided story marred by errors of fact and interpretation — essentially a poorly done and partisan attack on the agency that has done the most to protect America," former CIA directors George Tenet, Porter Goss and Michael Hayden wrote in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece.

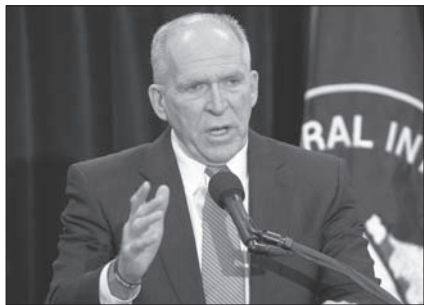
Hayden was singled out by Senate investigators for what they said was a string of misleading or outright false statements he gave in 2007 about the importance of the CIA's brutal treatment of detainees in thwarting terrorist attacks. He described the focus on him as "ironic on so many levels" as any wrongdoing predated his arrival at the CIA. "They were far too interested in yelling at me," Hayden said in an email to

The Associated Press.

The Intelligence Committee's 500-page release concluded that the CIA inflicted suffering on al-Qaida prisoners beyond its legal authority and that none of the agency's "enhanced interrogations" provided critical, life-saving intelligence. It cited the CIA's own records, documenting in detail how waterboarding and lesser-known techniques such as "rectal feeding" were actually employed.

The CIA is now in the uncomfortable position of defending itself publicly, given its basic mission to protect the country secretly. Its 136-page rebuttal suggests Senate Democrats searched through millions of documents to pull out only the evidence backing up predetermined conclusions. That's like doing a crossword puzzle on Tuesday with Wednesday's answer's key," the CIA said in an emailed statement.

Challenging one of the report's most explosive arguments — that harsh interrogation techniques didn't lead to Osama bin Laden — the CIA pointed to questioning of Ammar al-Baluchi, who revealed how an al-Qaida operative relayed messages to and from bin Laden after he departed Afghanistan. Before then, the CIA said, it knew only that courier Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti interacted with bin Laden in 2001 when the



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVALS/AP

CIA Director John Brennan addresses the media in Langley, Va., on Thursday. He responded to criticism of interrogation tactics employed by the intelligence community on terrorism suspects.

al-Qaida leader was accessible to many of his followers. Al-Kuwaiti eventually led the U.S. to bin Laden's compound in Pakistan.

Poring over the same body of evidence as the investigators, the CIA insisted most of the 20 case studies cited in the Senate report actually illustrated how enhanced interrogations helped disrupt plots, capture terrorists and prevent another 9/11-type attack. The agency said it obtained legal authority for its actions from the Justice Department and White House, and made "good faith" efforts to keep congressional leaders informed.

Former CIA officials responsible for the program echoed these points in interviews.

John McLaughlin, then deputy CIA director, said waterboarding and other tactics transformed Sept. 11 mastermind Khalid

Sheikh Mohammed into a U.S. "consultant" on al-Qaida.

Tenet, the director on 9/11, said the interrogation program "saved thousands of Americans lives" while the country faced a "ticking time bomb every day."

Former Vice President Dick Cheney also responded, saying in a Fox News interview that the CIA's approach to interrogating terror suspects was necessary after the 9/11 attacks, and the people who carried them out were doing their duty.

"We asked the agency to go take steps and put in place programs that were designed to catch the bastards who killed 3,000 of us on 9/11 and make sure it didn't happen again, and that's exactly what they did, and they deserve a lot of credit," he said, "not the condemnation they are receiving from the Senate Democrats."

Architects of brutal methods had little experience

By KEN DILANIAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When the CIA set out to design a program to elicit intelligence from captured terrorists, it turned to two former Air Force psychologists with no practical interrogation experience and no specialized knowledge of al-Qaida, according to a Senate investigation released this week.

What the two men did have was an understanding of the brutal methods employed on American prisoners of war by governments such as North Korea and Vietnam, methods that were later used to help train U.S. soldiers and airmen to resist torture.

The spy agency ended up outsourcing much of its interrogation program to the pair, who formed a company that ultimately was paid \$81 million, the Senate report says. The report adds new details to what has long been known about the integral role the two psychologists played in some of the harshest treatment of CIA detainees.

The report refers to the men using pseudonyms, Grayson Swagart and Hammond Dunbar. But current and former U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity about information that is

not public, have identified them as James E. Mitchell and Bruce Jessen.

The CIA told Congress in 1989 that "inhumane physical or psychological techniques are counterproductive because they do not produce intelligence and will probably result in false answers," the report notes. But Mitchell and Jessen convinced top officials at the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, then run by Cofer Black and Jose Rodriguez, that breaking people was the key to unraveling terrorism plots.

They reverse-engineered the military training techniques, which had never been studied as a form of interrogation. Among their recommendations were humiliation, painful stress positions, confinement, sleep deprivation — and waterboarding.

"On the CIA's behalf, the contract psychologists developed theories of interrogation based on 'learned helplessness,' and developed the use of enhanced interrogation techniques that was approved for use against Abu Zubaydah and subsequent CIA detainees," the Senate report said, referring to the first significant al-Qaida figure captured, taken to a secret prison and subjected to a battery of techniques.

The psychologists person-

ally conducted interrogations of Zubaydah and other significant detainees using those techniques. They also evaluated whether detainees' psychological states allowed for the continued use of the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques."

Some CIA officials were troubled by the conflict of interest, the report notes. One CIA official emailed that the pair had a "vested interest" in waterboarding. Another accused them of "arrogance and narcissism."

The CIA, in its response to the Senate report, acknowledged that the conflict "raised concerns and prompted deliberation," leading to a new rule in early 2003 that no contractor could issue a definitive psychological assessment of a detainee.

But the agency defended hiring the two psychologists.

"We believe their expertise was so unique that we would have been derelict had we not sought them out when it became clear that CIA would be heading into

the uncharted territory of the program," the agency said in its written response.

Jessen helped interrogate detainee Gul Rahman at a dungeon-like Afghanistan prison called the Salt Pit, the report says, a session that included "48 hours of sleep deprivation, auditory overload, total darkness, isolation, a cold shower and rough treatment." A few days later, after Jessen left, Rahman was found dead of hypothermia.

Both men helped waterboard 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and threatened his children, the report said.

Rodriguez, who has criticized the Senate report, said he had nothing to add beyond the account of his 2012 memoir, "Hard Measures," which says he asked the psychologists to help interrogate Zubaydah days after he was captured — before it was known whether he would cooperate.

The Senate report says Zubaydah offered useful intelligence to FBI agents before he was tortured.

Black, in an email, said he never met Mitchell and Jessen, and declined further comment.

Reached at his home in Florida, James E. Mitchell said he could not confirm his involvement with the CIA, citing a secrecy agree-

ment. But he challenged the Senate report as inaccurate in its assertion that the brutal tactics did not produce unique, otherwise unobtainable intelligence.

"I completely understand why the human rights organizations in the United States are upset by the Senate report," he said. "I would be upset by it too, if it were true."

"What they are asking you to believe is that multiple directors of the CIA and analysts who made their living for years doing this led to the federal government or were too stupid to know that the intelligence they were getting wasn't useful."

The report said Mitchell "had reviewed research on 'learned helplessness,' in which individuals might become passive and depressed in response to adverse or uncontrollable events. He theorized that inducing such a state could encourage a detainee to cooperate and provide information."

University of Pennsylvania psychologist Martin E.P. Seligman, who has written on "learned helplessness," said in an email, "I am grieved and horrified that good science, which has helped so many people overcome depression, may have been used for such dubious purposes."

Mohammed

WAR ON TERRORISM

A direct hit to Obama's policy aspirations

Like Gitmo and fight against Islamic State, Senate report diverts from president's preferred path

By GREG JAFFE
AND JULIET EILPERIN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A report that President Barack Obama hoped would end the debate over the CIA's brutal interrogation program has instead brought into sharper focus the lingering obstacles the president faces as he tries to move the country beyond what he has described as the fearful excesses of the post-9/11 era.

Within hours of the report's release Tuesday, Obama and one of his most trusted advisers released what appeared to be dueling statements about its conclusions. The president said the Senate Intelligence Committee's investigation had revealed actions "contrary to our values." His CIA director, John Brennan, countered that the same techniques had helped "save lives."

The awkward exchange, highly unusual between a president and a senior national security official, highlighted the challenges before

Obama as he works to end the war in Afghanistan, fight a new one in Iraq and Syria, and unwind many of the controversial policies implemented after the deadliest attack on U.S. soil.

Brennan, who has been perhaps Obama's most trusted national security adviser during the president's time in office, will play a crucial role in executing Obama's strategy against the Islamic State and in helping shape the political argument for closing the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Both are essential to Obama's foreign policy legacy.

Asked on Wednesday about Obama's view of Brennan following the report's release, White House press secretary Josh Earnest said the CIA director is someone "the president relies on, on a daily basis, to keep this country safe."

Earnest avoided discussing the apparent split between Obama and Brennan over whether interrogation techniques such as waterboarding, sleep deprivation

and rectal hydration produced valuable intelligence.

"These techniques undermine our ability to use this very powerful tool," Earnest said.

The dispute with the CIA director is indicative of the broader resistance to Obama's efforts to take the country off a permanent war footing.

In the remaining two years of his presidency, Obama will work to rein in the chaotic aftermath of an Iraq War he once derided as "dumb," end the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan and close an offshore military prison that Obama has called "a mess" and a "misguided experiment."

The prison at Guantanamo, which Obama has been trying to shutter for the past six years, remains a top priority for the president and a potent symbol of his struggle to translate his principles into an enduring foreign policy legacy.

"He recognizes that it is emblematic of this entire set of policies and we aren't going to move

past this chapter with Guantanamo open," said Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser.

Since taking office, Obama has tried to overcome congressional opposition to closing the prison.

Earlier in his administration, Obama insisted that Guantanamo represented bad foreign policy, undermining the United States' "moral authority" in the world. Brennan, too, has advocated for the facility's closure. Of late, the president and his CIA director have settled on a more incremental approach, stepping up transfers of prisoners who have been cleared for release but can't be returned to their home countries.

One hope is that the smaller number of prisoners and the passage of time will yield a less emotional debate, making it possible to move the remaining inmates to a prison out of U.S. soil.

"The real problem in closing Guantanamo is the politics and not the policy," said Steve Vladeck, a law professor at Amer-

ican University. "That's what the president has to change."

Two weeks before Islamic State fighters took Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, the president in a speech at the U.S. Military Academy outlined his vision of a foreign policy less reliant on military force. Instead, the United States would use foreign aid, diplomatic alliances and economic sanctions to "steer the currents of history." U.S. troops would increasingly train local allies to fight their own battles.

In Iraq and Syria, the new model collided with a rapacious enemy: the Islamic State. White House officials said the U.S. trainers and airstrikes have helped the Iraqis make modest gains in recent weeks and that they expect the country's forces to retake some major cities from the Islamic State next year. In Syria, the battle probably will stretch well past Obama's presidency.

For the White House, the focus these days is on "sustainability" rather than victory.

'Enhanced' interrogation works – for Hollywood

By TERENCE MCCOY
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — On a January day in 2004, from his perch inside a Little Rock, Ark., hospital, President George W. Bush introduced the American people to an al-Qaida operative named Hasan Ghul, announcing his capture. Bush proclaimed the country now had "one less enemy to worry about." As the Iraq War raged, the announcement attracted only modest attention.

But that operative would prove more important than most. Hasan Ghul would ultimately divulge vital information that would lead to Osama bin Laden's death.

It didn't take much for him to spill it, according to Tuesday's U.S. Senate report on the CIA's interrogation methods. He "opened up right away and was cooperative from the onset," telling interrogators bin Laden was "likely living in Peshawar area" in Pakistan.

There was more, he said. Bin Laden "always" with his courier. The information did not save Ghul from "enhanced" interrogation later, but the Senate report

said it "provided no other information of substance."

According to the Senate report, the successes of harsh interrogation in the hunt for bin Laden were substantially fewer than what both the CIA has claimed and what the Hollywood film "Zero Dark Thirty" subsequently showed. But in 2011, CIA Director Leon Panetta publicly claimed such interrogations were key to finding bin Laden — which "Zero Dark Thirty" reflected. The movie, which amassed several Oscar nominations, included several interrogation scenes that strongly implied waterboarding and other methods helped suss out bin Laden's location.

That narrative contrasts with the Senate report's central conclusion that harsh interrogation isn't successful. Though the CIA disputes that, the report found severe interrogation was more likely to induce false information, if anything at all.

But that's not how it looks on TV. Harsh interrogation, as an effective means of eliciting crucial information, has become firmly entrenched in popular culture.



Courtesy of Fox Broadcasting Co.



Courtesy of Columbia Pictures

Left: Kiefer Sutherland played Jack Bauer on TV's "24." **Right:** Jessica Chastain played a member of the elite team of spies and military operatives that tracked Osama bin Laden in the film "Zero Dark Thirty."

From "24" to "Homeland," "Scandal" to "Spooks," the decision to use harsh interrogation methods is often conveyed on television as a difficult but necessary compromise of ethics to protect national security. The tactics, like those of Jack Bauer in "24," are often brutal and violent — incorporating electricity, knives, drugs, bare hands. But they're unnervingly successful. Over eight tense seasons, Bauer, who operated under the edict of "whatever it takes," consistently beat answers out of obstinate terrorists, who almost always divulged vital secrets that helped foil terrorism plots.

"You're talking about torturing this man?" a fake president at one

point asked Bauer.

"I'm talking about doing what's necessary to stop this warhead from being used against us," replied Bauer, who then extracted the information with a knife.

"Isn't it obvious that if there was a nuke in New York City that was about to blow — or any other city in this country — that, even if you were going to go to jail, it would be the right thing to do?" asked "24" producer Joel Surnow.

Scholars call such a paradox the "Necessity Doctrine." It describes a familiar "ticking bomb" scenario, in which action must be taken and taken now.

It's a choice viewers are more willing to consider following the

consumption of shows like "24," a recent American University study by scholars Erin Kearns and Joseph Young found. The researchers showed 150 students harsh interrogation scenes from the show. Sometimes the method worked, rearing key clues. Other times, the scenes were cut short before the students could determine whether the method had been successful.

Then they interviewed the students on their opinion. It turned out the scene's resolution mattered a great deal.

"This may suggest that being primed on torture leads people to believe that it works," the report said.

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WAR ON TERRORISM



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., joins other members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to discuss a proposal to authorize the limited use of U.S. armed forces against the Islamic State militant group during a session on Capitol Hill on Thursday.

Troops: Panel gives OK for limited war powers in fight against Islamic State group

FROM FRONT PAGE

"There is tendency for executives from both parties to abuse these resolutions and make them mean anything they want," he said.

Fellow Republicans rejected limitations on the war effort through the authorization for the use of military force, saying the decision on ground troops must be left up to the president and military commanders.

"I agree with everyone who says we really don't want to use ground troops there," said Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz. "It is fine for the president to say it. He can change his mind any time he warrants it, but

putting [a restriction] in an AUMF is not the way to go."

Secretary of State John Kerry testified before the Senate on Tuesday and requested that the chamber leave the option for ground troops open. Obama has continued to maintain he will not allow another land war in Iraq, but commanders have signaled it may be necessary to defeat the Islamic State group.

"Why would we authorize the use of force if we are not fully committed to victory?" said Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis.

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DOD marks Syria missions for danger pay

Pentagon plans to give back pay to hundreds of troops

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is giving hundreds of troops thousands of dollars in back pay for flying airstrike and surveillance missions over Syria since mid-September, due to an oversight in danger pay guidelines, defense officials said Wednesday.

Acting Assistant Defense Secretary Stephanie Barna signed a new memo this week designating the airspace over Syria as a dangerous location so troops can now receive additional money when they fly through there.

Until this week, U.S. forces could receive imminent danger pay for serving on the ground in Syria as well as a number of other warzone locations, but the Syrian airspace was not listed. Under the new guidance, troops flying through the airspace can now receive \$7.50 per day, up to a maximum of \$225 a month.

According to Lt. Cmdr. Nathan Christensen, the Pentagon estimates that about 600 service members per week are entitled to

the pay, and it will cost the Pentagon about \$18,000 each month.

While a number of fighter jets carry one pilot or a pilot and weapons officer, other aircraft such as the E-2 early warning aircraft or other sophisticated surveillance planes can have from four to a dozen or more crew members, depending on the mission.

"The Department recognized that there was an imminent threat of physical harm to servicemembers conducting operations above Syria and we wanted to ensure that they received the additional compensation they deserve," said Christensen, adding that the change was requested by U.S. Central Command, endorsed by the Joint Staff and approved by the Pentagon.

Troops routinely receive the stipend if they serve, for example, in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Yemen and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The list has evolved over many years, with countries added as they became more dangerous hot spots.

Military leaders do periodic reviews of the list.

\$1.1T spending bill clears major hurdle

By ANDREW TAYLOR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A \$1.1 trillion U.S. governmentwide spending bill narrowly cleared a major hurdle Thursday and headed toward a final vote later, despite opposition from tea party Republicans over immigration and Democrats angry over last-minute changes to bank regulations and looser rules on campaign spending.

The 214-212 vote came on a resolution to start debate. Republicans were upset that the measure fails to block President Barack Obama's recent actions on immigration and anger came from Democrats over the two provisions they consider poison pills.

The White House put out a statement endorsing the measure.

With lawmakers facing a midnight Thursday deadline to prevent a government shutdown, Congress was also expected to pass a measure to keep the government running for two days. The aim is to approve the longer-term bill before adjourning

Friday, though that could slip into the weekend.

Passage later Thursday was in at least some doubt because Democrats, whose votes Republican leaders need to adopt the bill, were furious over provisions that weaken regulations on risky financial instruments called swaps and another that allows wealthy donors to flood political parties with campaign cash. The two items, neither of which was disclosed until late in this week's negotiations on the bill, are particularly toxic to Democrats.

Many Democrats tended to focus more on the bad than the good since the 1,603-page bill was released late Tuesday. Large swaths of Republicans praised it for cutting spending for the IRS and the Environmental Protection Agency.

But Democrats won victories, too, and the alternative is to boot the unfinished spending bills into next year, when Republicans will have retaken the Senate and bolstered their numbers in the House. Republicans were cautiously confident that they

would get the Democratic votes they need to pass the bill.

The underlying measure funds the day-to-day operations of every agency of government in a year in which such so-called discretionary spending has been frozen at current levels for both domestic agencies and the Pentagon. It's the biggest remaining item on the agenda of the current Congress that hopes to adjourn by week's end.

The compromise bill permits virtually the entire government to operate normally until the fiscal year ends next year on Sept. 30, with the exception of the Homeland Security Department.

Funds for that agency will run out on Feb. 27, when Republicans are expected to try to use the expiration as leverage to force Obama to roll back a decision suspending the threat of deportation for an estimated 4 million immigrants living in the country illegally. The measure adheres to the tight budget caps negotiated previously between the White House and Republicans.



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Senators, from left, Bob Corker, R-Tenn.; James Risch, R-Idaho; John McCain, R-Ariz.; and Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, rush to the Senate floor in Washington on Thursday for a procedural vote on the \$585 billion defense bill.

NATION

Driving while black? App developers want to help

By STEVEN DUBOIS
The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Though the developers of the soon-to-be released "Driving While Black" smartphone application want motorists to download their product, there is a time when they definitely don't want users searching for it.

"Do not reach for your phone when you are talking to police," stressed Melvin Oden-Orr, one of two Portland lawyers creating the app.

Avoiding moves that could make police think you're reaching for a gun is just one tip included in the app that educates drivers about how to safely deal with police during traffic stops.

Despite its attention-grabbing name, Oden-Orr said the app due for release in late December will provide common sense advice to motorists of all races and outline what civil rights you have during a stop. With the phone — hopefully, in a hands-free device — the app allows drivers to send an alert to friends and family that they have been pulled over. There's also a recording function to document the interaction with an officer.

The app is coming to market

'It's about being safe during a traffic stop so that everyone goes home alive.'

Melvin Oden-Orr
co-creator of the "Driving While Black" app

as protesters around the country to keep attention on instances of deadly encounters with police in Ferguson, Mo., and New York City. Similar apps also are aimed at helping people navigate interactions with police.

Three Georgia teenagers created "Five-O," an app released last summer that lets people rate their interactions with law enforcement. Last month, American Civil Liberties Union affiliates in four states unveiled "Mobile Justice," an app that allows users to take video of police encounters and upload the video to the ACLU. It's modeled on "Stop and Frisk Watch," an app released for New Yorkers in 2012.

"It's obviously in the forefront of everybody's mind; the police know they are being recorded and people in public know they can record," said Sarah Rossi, director of advocacy and policy for the ACLU Missouri affiliate. "I think the benefit of this app

(Mobile Justice) specifically is it goes straight to the ACLU and we can review it for any due-process violations."

The apps also include a "Know Your Rights" section that informs people about their rights when contacted by police.

Portland attorney Mariann Hyland got the idea for "Driving While Black" after learning of an app for drivers suspected of drunken driving. She approached Oden-Orr in April, and the two have been working on the app since summer with software developer James Pritchett.

The app will include a directory of lawyers for drivers who believe they were wrongfully stopped or searched. The app itself won't provide legal advice, such as telling users how to beat a traffic ticket.

"It's about being safe during a traffic stop so that everyone goes home alive," Oden-Orr said.

Lost Hawaii fisherman found after weeks at sea

The Associated Press

HONOLULU — When the Coast Guard told Zakary Ingraham they were suspending a search for his father, a Hawaii fisherman, he didn't want to believe the father he lost contact with for at least 15 years was gone.

His father, Ron Ingraham, had been missing since Thanksgiving when he put out a mayday call saying he was in danger of sinking nearly 50 miles from the Big Island. The Coast Guard suspended the search on Dec. 1.

"I thought, well, at least dad died doing what he loved," the son recalled. "I was trying to emotionally quell myself. But at the same time, I kind of had that feeling he wasn't gone yet."

Then, he got word his father was found Tuesday, dehydrated and hungry but uninjured. Ron Ingraham arrived Wednesday on the Hawaiian island of Molokai, where he lives on his boat that was towed to shore by the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard had no details yet about what went wrong on Ron Ingraham's boat or how he survived at sea.

Efforts by The Associated Press



COURTESY OF THE U.S. NAVY/AP

Cmdr. John Barsano welcomes Ron Ingraham aboard the USS Paul Hamilton after rescuing him Tuesday near Hawaii.

to reach Ron Ingraham through the Coast Guard on Wednesday were unsuccessful.

When the Coast Guard received the Thanksgiving mayday, officials sought to contact his next of kin, son Zakary, 43, in Missouri. They were unable to reach him until the following Monday, the day they decided to suspend the search.

"It's tough to put into words," Zakary Ingraham said in a phone interview Wednesday from St. Joseph, Mo., as his father was en route to Molokai.

"You're crushed, and you don't know what to do," he said. "And of course, I'm in Missouri so that made it feel worse. I couldn't go out and look for him. It was horrible."

For Coast Guard officials, call-

ing off a search is the hardest choice they have to make, Lt. Scott Carr said.

"You're making a decision to stop searching when you don't have a resolution," he said. "We searched for five days. ... We used every resource we had, and we weren't able to find him."

A Navy ship was nearby when the Coast Guard received Ron Ingraham's mayday Tuesday. Crew members from that vessel, guided-missile destroyer the USS Paul Hamilton, gave him water and food.

"It's the holidays. We all have family who we love and miss, being here stationed far away from the continental U.S.," Carr said. "Anytime we rescue a mariner is a great day."



ERIC RISSBERG/AP

Commuter M.L. Mann struggles to make her way to a ferry to San Francisco on Thursday. A severe storm that swept across the San Francisco Bay Area knocked out power and delayed travel.

California storm knocks out power and delays flights

By SUDHIN THANAWALA
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A storm expected to be one of the windiest and rainiest in five years swept across the San Francisco Bay Area on Thursday, knocking out power to tens to thousands and delaying travel by air, train and ferry.

Pacific Gas & Electric was reporting outages are widespread across the Bay Area due to weather, but officials weren't immediately available to give a specific number of outages.

A spokesman for Bay Area Rapid Transit said a PG&E transformer appeared to have malfunctioned near the system's Montgomery Street station. Jim Allison said the station has been shut to both BART trains and

trains from the city's Muni transit system and there's no estimate on when it will reopen.

High winds canceled some ferry service east of San Francisco. At least 10 ferry departures around the region were canceled Thursday due to weather conditions, the San Francisco Bay Ferry reported on its website.

Brief gusts of wind blasted the Golden Gate Bridge and high waves were crashing.

Some flights arriving at San Francisco International Airport were facing delays averaging three hours and 40 minutes, the Federal Aviation Administration reported on its website.

Public schools in several Bay Area cities, including San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley, and some private schools canceled Thursday classes.

Car jumps the curb in Manhattan, injuring 7

NEW YORK — Police say a car jumped a curb in the Herald Square shopping district in midtown Manhattan, injuring seven people, including five pedestrians.

It happened about 10 p.m. Wednesday on West 34th Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues.

Authorities said the 34-year-old female driver and her male passenger were among the injured.

All seven were hospitalized with serious but non-life-threatening injuries.

Police said the driver is in custody. She's being investigated for possible drunken driving.

They said she was traveling east on 34th Street when she rear-ended a vehicle. She then backed up, entered the westbound lanes heading the wrong way and struck another vehicle. Police said the car then mounted the sidewalk, hitting the pedestrians.

From The Associated Press

NATION



Garret Ean, one of many self-proclaimed "Robin Hooders," puts money in expired meters ahead of parking enforcement officers in Keene, N.H.

Jim Cole/AP

NO QUARTER

NH city wants 'Robin Hood' meter feeders to back off from parking officers

The Associated Press

The self-styled "Robin Hooders" race to the rescue of the parking peasantry, pumping quarters into their expired meters and leaving behind cards informing them they have been saved from "the king's tariff."

Nobody, not even the king — in this case the quaint New Hampshire college town of Keene — disputes their right to use pocket change as political capital in what they view as a fight against government oppression.

But city officials say the not-so-merry band leaves behind more than cards with a cartoon Robin Hood and a suggestion to pay their good deed forward: stressed-out parking enforcement officers. Now the New Hampshire Supreme Court is deliberating if there is a line to be drawn between protecting free speech rights and protecting government employees from harassment.

The six Robin Hooders won round one last December when a superior court judge dismissed the city's request for an order restricting how close the protesters can come to the officers, some of whom claim they have been bumped and assailed with profanities. That court ruled the Robin Hooders' actions amount to protected political expression that can't be restricted.

The city is supported in its legal battle by the New Hampshire Municipal Association, whose lawyers claim the lower

court did not weigh the government's interest in protecting employees from harm and impediments to doing their jobs. The New Hampshire Civil Liberties Union falls squarely on the side of the Robin Hooders.

One of the city's three parking enforcement officers — Alan Givetz, a veteran of Iraq — quit the job in July 2013 after repeatedly being harassed and called a "coward" and a baby-killer by the Robin Hooders, court documents say. The city claims another, Jane McDermott, was followed to a restroom and called a "liar" and a "thief."

The Robin Hooders — affiliates of the rabble-rousing Free Keene group that protests government intervention on issues ranging from guns to marijuana — say they're the ones with the motorists' well-being at heart as they feed meters, sometimes walking just ahead of the parking enforcement of-

ficers who would write a ticket.

An online recruitment effort last year to enlist additional Robin Hooders added, "As a bonus, you get to have fun as you deny the local government gang the hard-earned dollars of the good people of Keene."

Lawyers for Keene argue that a buffer zone of 15 feet around their parking enforcement officers would not infringe on the free speech rights of the Robin Hooders. The justices have not indicated when they will rule.

Attorney Charles Bauer, representing Keene, said even 5 feet back would be beneficial.

"The proximity is the key to this case," he argued to the justices last month. He said later that duration is also an issue.

"These people are haranguing them constantly," Bauer said.

Though its employees have reported

'As a bonus, you get to have fun as you deny the local government gang the hard-earned dollars of the good people of Keene.'

online recruitment ad to enlist parking meter "Robin Hooders"

harassment and physical contact with the Robin Hooders, Bauer said the city has no interest in arresting the protesters. "We say, 'Continue your protest, but do it 5-10 feet back, please.'"

Attorney Jon Meyer, representing the Robin Hooders, said the city is highlighting several contentious incidents among thousands of interactions between the protesters and enforcement officers over the past several years. He said testimony at a hearing last year indicated the demonstrators were respectful and "almost always stepped back" when asked.

But even then, the peace of mind of the enforcement officers is irrelevant, Meyer told the Supreme Court.

"One of the prices of public service is you have to put up with a certain amount of grief," he argued.

WORLD

'I DO NOT WANT MY CHILDREN TO DIE IN THIS TRASH'

Woman sought good life in New Delhi, but found rags

The Associated Press

NEW DELHI — Six months ago, Marjina stepped off a train in New Delhi with her two children, hoping to find a better life after her husband abandoned them without so much as a goodbye.

She thought leaving her home in West Bengal to find work in the Indian capital would give her children a chance at a better life. But the only job she could find was as a "rag picker" — picking through other people's garbage to find salvageable bits to resell or recycle.

It is filthy, dangerous work, performed by millions of people across India. Rag picking is effectively the primary recycling system in India. But the work is by no means environmentally friendly, and very far from being secure. While the rag pickers offer invaluable services to the city, they have few rights. Every day, they are exposed to deadly poisons.

Marjina, who goes by only one name, and her children — daughter Murshida, 12, and son Shahid-ul, 7 — spent their days at a landfill in Gazipur, on the outskirts of New Delhi. The next morning they would sit outside their single-room shanty and sort the trash into metal, plastic and paper. The children counted themselves lucky if they found a discarded toy or a piece of plastic jewelry to play with. The family earned just \$26 per month. Rent was \$9.

The work took a toll on the family's health. Marjina's children were constantly sick. Her daughter contracted dengue fever and had to be hospitalized.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently launched a "Clean India" campaign in which he asked people to help keep their surroundings tidy. But there were no benefits announced for people like Marjina.

After months of poverty, illness and shame, Marjina and her children returned to that train station in New Delhi on Nov. 18, headed back to an uncertain future in West Bengal.

"I do not want my children to die in this trash," she said.

Daily wage labor back home would earn Marjina barely enough to survive. Her children, who did not go to school in New Delhi, likely won't in West Bengal, either, though all Indian children have a right to free education.

Whatever awaits the family, Marjina said, it could not be worse than life as a rag picker in New Delhi.

Murshida, 12, daughter of rag picker Marjina, lies on a sack of trash outside their rented shanty on the outskirts of New Delhi, India, after she fell ill.

PHOTOS BY ALTAF QADRI/AP



Young waste pickers look for recyclable items at a landfill on the outskirts of New Delhi.



Above: Murshida sits on the lap of her mother, Marjina, as the train leaves for their West Bengal village.

Left: Murshida helps Marjina lift a sackful of trash outside their shanty.

WORLD

Running out of room

Officials want to limit the time bodies can be buried in Mexico City cemeteries

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ
The Associated Press

Edgar Galvan watched as two gravediggers shoveled muddy soil from his father's grave until they reached a set of bones mixed with wood chips, the remnants of the coffin he was buried in seven years earlier.

The gravediggers placed the bones in a black plastic bag and handed them to Galvan, who planned to cremate them and put the ashes in a small crypt the family bought in a church.

"I've had to go through two difficult moments, first burying him and now unburying him," the 42-year-old carpenter said as he stood in the San Isidro cemetery in the Mexico City borough of Azcapotzalco.

Mexico's capital is rapidly running out of gravesites, and many residents of this growing metropolis of 9 million people have to exhume the remains of their loved ones once the burial rights expire to make room for new bodies. Officials say there is no public land available for new cemeteries.

The lack of cemetery space has prompted the city's legislative assembly to propose a law that would reduce the time a body can remain in a grave and encourage people to cremate the bodies of their loved ones, a move that critics say will threaten Mexico's long and rich traditions surrounding burying and celebrating the dead.

Assemblywoman Polimnia Sierra, who proposed the law, said the city's 119 cemeteries have only 71,000 gravesites available and that each year about 30,000 people die in the capital.

"In less than three years (the cemeteries) will be completely filled," Sierra said in defense of the law which was passed by the assembly last summer but sent back by Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera who wanted changes to its language. A vote on the revised law is expected soon. It would require that the city government educate people about cremation as an option and build more crematoriums — there are currently just two public crematoriums. It would also lower the maximum gravesite tenure from 21 years to 15 years, as long as cemetery rights are paid.

Complicating matters is that the regulations aren't applied consistently, with borough officials administering and sometimes setting their own grave time limits in the cemeteries in their areas. Sierra said there have been cases of cemeteries



PHOTOS BY REBECCA BLACKWELL/AP

Graves lie tightly packed together in a nearly full San Isidro cemetery in northern Mexico City in September. Officials say there is no room available in the capital for new cemeteries.

exhuming graves to bury someone else in as little as one year.

Once remains are exhumed, families commonly put them in above-ground niches offered by the cemetery, cremate them, bury them in a different cemetery or, if no one claims the remains, they are reburied at the same grave but underneath the coffin and tombstone of the new body.

While other countries around the world reuse graves, it is a sensitive issue in Mexico where celebrating the dead is still a living part of the culture. The law has become a tug-of-war between government officials in the center of this sprawling metropolis, which is increasingly growing vertically, and residents of its outer, more rural boroughs who preserve pre-Columbian traditions.

The law's opponents say above-ground mausoleums and crypts don't allow for the traditional Day of the Dead celebrations on Nov. 1 and 2, when Mexicans honor the dead by building elaborate altars on their tombstones, laden with candles, flowers, colorful sugar skulls and the favorite food and drink of the departed. Families gather in cem-

eteries brightened by flickering candles to pray and share memories of their loved ones, whose photos sit on the graves.

Jesus Guzman, a member of the Autonomous Union of Native Towns and Neighborhoods of the Federal District, said many indigenous Mexicans prefer burial and are reluctant to accept cremation.

"Their worldview is not the same as ours," Guzman said of city officials backing the law. "Can you imagine that with the stroke of a pen they can erase All Saints Day and the Day of the Dead? They have no idea what they are doing."

In June, his group blocked a major avenue to protest the law.

In Mexico City's outer boroughs it's still common to see a nightlong wake being held on the patio of a home, then mourners carrying the coffin on their shoulders through traffic-clogged streets toward the cemetery. The processions are often accompanied by brass bands or mariachis.

"What really bothers us is that they don't respect our loved ones," said Jose Jimenez, who helps administer the San Francisco cemetery in the borough of Magdalena

Contreras. "They come a year or two after we bury them, take them out of the grave and bury whoever is next. We won't allow them to take away our resources, our cemetery."

At the Azcapotzalco cemetery where Galvan's father was buried, 63,000 older gravesites are sold in perpetuity — burial time limits were established in 1984. Another 22,000 have limited tenure. Some graves have fresh flowers, but many others are overgrown with weeds. Records are kept in old ledgers, some barely legible, and officials say it's unclear how many graves have been abandoned.

Like many Mexicans, Galvan says mausoleums and crypts still seem like a foreign option to him. His family has bought a crypt in a church in Mexico City's Tlatelolco neighborhood. Galvan said his mother wants her ashes, her husband's ashes, and two of her children's ashes, including his, to be in the same crypt. "I told her that's fine; my ashes can be in that crypt but first I want to be buried. I want to be in the ground for at least a year," he said.



Discarded tombstones and grave markers lie smashed following exhumations to make room for new burials at San Isidro cemetery.



Flowers decorate burial niches at San Isidro cemetery in September.



A coffin containing human remains is hauled away after being exhumed to free up space for new burials at the San Isidro cemetery.

WORLD



Ahn Young-joon/AP

Maverick CEO Johnny Oh speaks during an interview at his office at the Gangnam district in Seoul, South Korea, on Nov. 20. Maverick recently launched a cloud-based mobile video editing app called Alive Story from Oh's startup in Gangnam.

Gangnam restyles itself as tech startups center

By YOOKYUNG LEE
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The uber-trendy Seoul neighborhood made famous by the "Gangnam Style" K-pop hit is known for status-conscious people, plastic surgery clinics and Ivy League prep schools. Now it's making a name as a bustling center for tech startups.

Many young South Koreans, some educated overseas, are going to Gangnam to start mobile or Internet businesses. Venture capitalists from Silicon Valley and Japan are opening offices in the area to find promising Korean services or apps to bet their money on.

As one of the most wired places on earth, Seoul has been a crucible for several startup scenes. The government is even aiming to make a town south of Seoul a Korean Silicon Valley. But it is in the 40 square kilometers of land south of the Han river where the growth of Internet and mobile startups has been most evident and the related culture most vivid.

Despite its reputation as a bea-

con for the shallow and status-obsessed, Gangnam has a special significance in South Korea as the place where a globalized youth culture emerged from a generation that had opportunities to travel and study abroad. Gangnam is still seen as the place that brings foreign culture and ideas to the rest of the country.

"Gangnam has the best of the New York city and Silicon Valley," said Steven Baek, a marketing director at FuturePlay, an incubator for startups.

Silicon Valley is "tech-centric, with a lot of nerdy and geeky people but it doesn't have much diversity," he said. "Gangnam's benefit is diversity. New York has lots of fun clubs and rich consumer-based culture like Gangnam but it doesn't have many engineers."

Another common reason for startups going to Gangnam is that everyone else is there, which makes networking effortless.

Near Gangnam's Teheran-ro boulevard, many Gangnam startups, venture capitalists and startup incubators have opened offices

in the past year, with more arriving in coming months.

Around 2000, South Korea's first wave of Internet companies dotted this 4-kilometer-long street. After the dot-com bubble burst, most of the big Internet portals and online game firms that survived moved to the south of Seoul, but left a legacy. Engineers and developers live near or in Gangnam and older entrepreneurs from the dot.com era became angel investors and startup mentors.

For Johnny Oh, 35, who grew up in a fishing town, Gangnam was a foreign world that filled him with envy and insecurity. He moved to the area a decade ago and ran businesses dealing with Gangnam's well-heeled residents, hung out in Gangnam clubs and made Gangnam friends.

When he quit a big telecom firm last summer to start a Cloud-based video editing app to challenge YouTube and Vine, setting up an office in Gangnam was a no-brainer. "They are consumers with far-reaching influence," he said.

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WORLD

Bringing memories back to the town

People outnumbered by the scarecrows in dying Japanese village

By ELAINE KURTENBACH
The Associated Press

NAGORO, Japan — This village deep in the rugged mountains of southern Japan once was home to hundreds of families. Now, only 35 people remain, outnumbered three-to-one by scarecrows that Tsukimi Ayano crafted to help fill the days and replace neighbors who died or moved away.

At 65, Ayano is one of the younger residents of Nagoro. She moved back from Osaka to look after her 85-year-old father after decades away.

"They bring back memories," Ayano said of the life-sized dolls crowded into corners of her farmhouse home, perched on fences and trees, lined side-by-side at a produce stall, the bus stop, anywhere a living person might stop to take a rest.

"That old lady used to come and chat and drink tea. That old man used to love to drink sake and tell stories. It reminds me of the old times, when they were still alive and well," she said.

Even more than its fading status as an export economic power, Japan's dwindling population may be its biggest challenge. More than 10,000 towns and villages in Japan are depopulated, the homes and infrastructure crumbling as the countryside empties thanks to the falling birthrate and rapid



PHOTOS BY ELAINE KURTENBACH/AP

Above: Tsukimi Ayano speaks as she stitches a scarecrow girl by her outdoor hearth at her home in the mountainous village of Nagoro, Tokushima prefecture, southern Japan, on Nov. 6. Below: teenager look alike scarecrow sits on a log pile.

“That old lady used to come and chat and drink tea. That old man used to love to drink sake and tell stories. It reminds me of the old times, when they were still alive and well.”

Tsukimi Ayano



aging.

In Japan's northeast, the massive earthquake and tsunami that struck in March 2011, killing more than 18,000 people, merely hastened the decline.

First the jobs go. Then the schools. Eventually, the electricity meters stop.

Neither Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling Liberal Democratic Party nor any of its rivals have

figured out how to “revive localities,” an urgent issue that has perplexed Japanese leaders for decades.

But some communities are trying various strategies for at-

tracting younger residents, slowing if not reversing their decline. In Kamiyama, another farming community closer to the regional capital of Tokushima, community organizers have mapped out a strategy for attracting artists and high-tech companies.

Nagoro is more typical of the thousands of communities that are turning into ghost towns or at best, open-air museums, frozen in time — a trend evident even in downtown Tokyo and in nearly or completely empty villages in the city's suburbs.

The one-street town is mostly abandoned, its shops and homes permanently shuttered.

The closure of the local elementary school two years ago was the last straw. Ayano unlocks the door and guides visitors through spotless classrooms populated with scarecrow students and teachers.

SEE MEMORIES ON PAGE 17

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WORLD

Memories: More than 100 scarecrows are scattered among villages

FROM PAGE 16

When she returned to her hometown 13 years ago, Ayano tried farming. Thinking her radish seeds may have been eaten by crows, she decided to make some scarecrows. By now there are more 100 scattered around Nagoro and other towns in Shikoku.

Like handcarved Buddhist sculptures, each has its own whimsical expression. Some sleep, their eyelids permanently shut. Others cuddle toddler scarecrows, or man plows and hoes.

Ayano brings one along for company on her 90-minute drive to buy groceries in the nearest big town. But most remain behind, to be photographed and marveled at by tourists who detour through the winding mountain roads.

"If I hadn't made these scarecrows, people would just drive right by," said Ayano, who greets a steady stream of visitors who wander through the village.

The plight of Japan's countryside partly a consequence of the country's economic success. As the nation grew increasingly affluent after World War II, younger Japanese flooded into the cities to fill jobs in factories and service industries, leaving their elders to tend small farms.

Greater Tokyo, with more than 37 million people and Osaka-Kobe, with 11.5 million, account for nearly 40 percent of the country's 127 million people, with another 10 million scattered in a handful of provincial capitals.

"There's been this huge sucking sound as the countryside is emptied," said Joel Cohen, a professor at Columbia University's Laboratory of Populations.

Japan's population began to decline in 2010 from a peak of



Above left: Scarecrow passengers wait for a bus at a bus stop for scarecrows in Nagoro, Tokushima Prefecture, southern Japan, on Nov. 6. Above right: Scarecrow teacher and students fill a classroom in the now deserted elementary school.



PHOTOS BY ELAINE KURTENBACH/AP

128 million. Without a drastic increase in the birthrate or a loosening of the staunch Japanese resistance to immigration, it is forecast to fall to about 108 million by 2050 and to 87 million by 2060.

By then, four in 10 Japanese will be over 65 years old.

The government has a target of preventing the population from falling below 100 million, but efforts to convince Japanese women to have more babies have yielded meager results. Young Japanese continue to drift from the countryside into big cities such as Tokyo, where the birthrate is a mere 1.13 children, thanks to long working hours, high costs and killer commutes.

The population of Miyoshi, which is the town closest to Nagoro, fell from 45,340 in 1985 to about 27,000 last year. A quarter of its population is over 75 years old. To entice residents to have more children, the town began

offering free nursery care for third children, free diapers and formula to age 2 and free health care through junior high school.

"The way to stop this is to get people to have more babies," said Kurokawa, whose own three children and seven grandchildren still live in the area. "Apart from that, we need for people to return here or move here. We need them all."

But it's not an easy sell, despite the fresh air and abundant space.

"You can't just grab people by the necks like kittens and drag them here," Kurokawa said. "They have to want to live here."

To match potential occupants with empty homes, towns like Miyoshi are setting up "empty house banks." Across Japan there are 8.2 million such "akiya," or empty homes, more than a tenth of all residential buildings.

But getting residents of half-empty towns to accept newcomers can also be a challenge. In Kamiyama, to the east, the town still struggles to convince owners who are often relatives living in distant cities to open up abandoned homes for rent or renovation, said Shinya Ominami, chairman of a civic group that has led efforts to revive the town.

Kamiyama, a town of about 6,000, set up an "Artists in Residence" program in 1999. The installation of fiber optic cable enabled the town to begin marketing itself as a location for IT satellite offices with rents as low as 20,000 yen (\$200) a month. Eleven companies have come so far.

In a briefing for potential investors and visiting officials from other areas, Ominami shows a slide of the town's shopping

street, dotted with houses that are empty, and then another with some of the buildings filled with new businesses — a bistro, a design studio, an IT incubation hub.

"In Kamiyama, 50,000 yen rent gets you a really luxurious property," Ominami said. "Extremely high class."

By drawing in younger new residents and encouraging businesses that cater to them, like an organic foods pizza parlor and a gelateria, the community can actually breathe new life into older, traditional industries like farming, he said.

"People think of decline as something pathetic. That's too vague. We need to think more clearly about this," Ominami said. "Once we accept this is the reality, we can figure out how to cope with it."

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SUBWAY



WORLD



KIN CHEUNG/AP

Police officers clear protesters' belongings Thursday at the occupied area outside the government headquarters in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong police arrest protesters in main camp

By KELVIN CHAN
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — Hong Kong officers cleared away the last barricades and tents of a 2½-month protest movement Thursday but the dozens of student leaders and other activists they took away vowed their fight for greater democracy wasn't over.

Hundreds of police officers carried out a methodical, peaceful operation to shut down the protest site that sprawled across a normally busy highway on the edge of the specially administered Chinese city's financial district.

The student-led demonstrators have been protesting Beijing's restrictions on the first election for Hong Kong's leader, though the movement's momentum has been fading in recent weeks.

Hundreds of remaining protesters heeded police warnings

to leave the protest zone, but dozens of students, pro-democracy lawmakers and others, including middle-aged and elderly supporters, remained sitting on the street Thursday afternoon. They chanted "I want true democracy" and "We will be back" but offered no resistance as they were taken away one by one, many lifted off the ground.

Among those police took away were pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai, Cantonese pop singer Denise Ho, veteran pro-democracy activist Martin Lee and pro-democracy legislators including Albert Ho.

Earlier Thursday, workers enforcing a court order removed barricades on the edge of the protest site before officers moved in and dismantled tents and obstructions from the rest of the site. They had warned protesters that they faced arrest if they did not leave.

Ruble under pressure despite interest rate hike

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — The ruble continued to slide Thursday even after Russia's Central Bank sought to ease the selling pressure on the currency following the drop in oil prices by raising interest rates again.

The Central Bank raised its key interest rate by a percentage point to 10.5 percent, citing an increasing rise in consumer prices and "significant inflation risks." The bank said inflation is expected to hit 10 percent for 2014 and to rise further in the first quarter of 2015.

Despite the increase, the ruble remained under pressure. The currency broke above 55 rubles to the dollar for the first time ever as it struck its new all-time low of 55.45. Against the euro, it was heading toward the 70-ruble threshold for the first time. In early afternoon trading, it hit 68.99 rubles to the euro before recovering slightly.

The ruble has lost about 42 percent of its value since January, battered by Western sanctions imposed over the conflict in eastern Ukraine and the drop in the price of oil, the backbone of the Russian economy.

Palestinian official's death cause disputed

By KARIN LAUB
The Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Israeli and Palestinian pathologists disagreed Thursday on whether a blow to the body or a bad heart was the main cause of death of a Palestinian Cabinet minister who collapsed shortly after scuffling with Israeli troops during a West Bank protest.

Palestinian doctors said Ziad Abu Ain, 55, died from a blow, not natural causes. Israeli doctors said he died from a blockage of the coronary artery due to arterial bleeding that could have been caused by stress.

Abu Ain's death, along with the Palestinian autopsy findings, could further inflame tensions between Israel and the Palestinians.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has said Abu Ain was the victim of a crime and of a "barbaric act" and decreed three days of mourning.

Abu Ain's funeral procession began at Abbas' Ramallah headquarters Thursday. Several thousand mourners, including Abbas, gathered in the walled compound and said prayers over the minister's coffin, draped in a Palestinian flag. From there, the procession headed toward a nearby cemetery, with some in the crowd shouting into the air.

Anticipating Palestinian protests over Abu Ain's death, the Israeli military fired troop reinforcements to the West Bank. Earlier Thursday, several dozen Palestinian stone throwers clashed with Israeli troops in the West Bank city of Hebron.

Abu Ain died Wednesday, shortly after a West Bank confrontation between Palestinian protesters and Israeli soldiers that included pushing and shoving. At one

point, a member of Israel's paramilitary border police grabbed Abu Ain by the throat and pushed him. Troops also fired tear gas during the confrontation.

Several minutes after the scuffle, Abu Ain collapsed to the ground, clutching his heart. He received first aid and was evacuated, but died en route to a hospital.

An autopsy was conducted later Wednesday by Palestinian, Jordanian and Israeli pathologists.

Palestinian pathologist Saber Aloul, citing preliminary findings, said Thursday that the "cause of death was a blow, and not natural causes."

He said that some of Abu Ain's front teeth were knocked out and dropped to the back of his mouth, and that regurgitated food entered the airway.

Palestinian Health Minister Jawad Awad said that "the results of the autopsy show that the ones who killed the martyr Ziad Abu Ain are the Israeli occupying forces."

Awad said two Jordanian pathologists also signed off on those findings, but that the Israeli doctors held off on a signature. The Israeli health ministry said the Israeli doctors didn't sign because it was a preliminary report, not a final report.

Israeli pathologists Chen Kugel and Maya Furman said Abu Ain had a bad heart, including 80 percent blockage by plaque in the blood vessels of his heart, and that this "caused him to be more sensitive to stress."

They said in a statement that the coronary artery was blocked due to bleeding under a layer of atherosclerotic plaque, and that this bleeding could have been caused by stress. The doctors said light bleeding and localized pressure were found on his neck.

STARS AND STRIPES.

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(and he will send you a note back)



WAR/MILITARY



PHOTOS BY JOSH SMITH/Stars and Stripes

Above and below: Afghan security forces secure the scene of a bombing at a French-run cultural center and school in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday.

Suicide bomber targets cultural center in Kabul

By HEATH DRUZIN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A suicide bomber attacked a French cultural center in Kabul on Thursday, killing at least one person and injuring more than a dozen others, according to Kabul Police Chief Abdul Rahman Rahimi.

Rahimi said the confirmed fatality was a foreigner, but he could not say what nationality. The Associated Press, quoting the acting interior minister, reported a German national was killed.

Rahimi said the bomber appeared to be in his mid-teens and detonated near the stage in the center's auditorium during a performance called "Heartbeat: Silence After the Explosion."

The center often hosts Afghan musical and theater performances as well as art exhibits. It is within the grounds of the French-funded Esteghal High School, or Lycée Esteghal.

It was the second deadly attack of the day in Kabul after a period of relative calm. A suicide bomber also detonated Thursday morning near an Afghan National Army bus, killing six soldiers, according to the AP.

Also Thursday morning, in the Western province of Herat, insurgents laid siege to a district center not far from the Afghan air force's main training ground.

The capital had been relatively quiet for about a week after a period late last month that saw a spasm of violence, including several attacks aimed at foreigners.

Afghanistan relies heavily on foreign assistance to fund basic



services as well as its army and police.

The violence comes at a crucial time as many international organizations are deciding the extent of their involvement in Afghanistan with a much smaller foreign troop presence.

International combat troops are set to leave Afghanistan at the end of the month, raising worries that an emboldened Taliban could step up attacks. Already, casualties among the Afghan security forces have spiked as they have taken on most of the day-

to-day fighting and international troops have largely pulled back to their bases.

The U.S.-led international military coalition here will leave behind 13,000 troops for a mission focused on training, advising and counterterrorism, but will still be able to provide crucial air support to Afghan forces. American leaders recently announced an increase of 1,000 troops to their post-2014 commitment.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.
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Twitter: @Druzin_Stripes

US shuts last detention center in Afghanistan

By BRIAN BENNETT
Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military shut its last detention center in Afghanistan on Wednesday, a day after a Senate Intelligence Committee report highlighted torture of terrorism suspects at former CIA-run prisons in the country.

The U.S. military shuttered its prison at Bagram Air Field north of Kabul after handing over two Tunisian prisoners to Afghan authorities and releasing a Jordanian prisoner who will be sent home or resettled with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Pentagon officials said.

Under a bilateral security agreement that takes effect Jan.

1, the government of Afghanistan will be responsible for all detention facilities in the country. The Bagram facility thus closed three weeks earlier than it might have.

The Tunisians — Ridha Ahmad Najjar and Lutfi al-Arabi al-Gharisi — will be imprisoned by Afghan authorities. The Jordanian, Tahaer Halaf, is not considered a security threat and was set free in Afghanistan, officials said.

In a statement, Mark Wright, a Pentagon spokesman, said that the last three prisoners in U.S. custody were transferred "after careful review" by the Defense and State departments.

"Effective Dec. 10, 2014, the Defense Department no longer operates detention facilities in Afghanistan or maintains custody of any detainees," he said.

Family of Afghan former translator joins him in US

By MARK EMMONS
San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News

SAN FRANCISCO — For nearly a year, Mohammad Usafi has been living safely in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Taliban could no longer harm him. But he still feared that they would go after his family — his father already had been murdered — because he had helped the U.S. Marines as an interpreter in his native Afghanistan.

Not anymore.

When Usafi's mother and seven younger siblings emerged from customs at San Francisco International Airport on Wednesday, a year's worth of worry disappeared. A smiling Usafi first embraced his mother in a long hug and then, one by one, he warmly welcomed each of his five brothers and two sisters to their new country.

The poignant moment was the culmination of the family's harrowing exit from their homeland that forced them to hide from people looking for them right up until their plane left the ground in Afghanistan.

"The last week has been so scary," said Usafi, 25. "I haven't slept because we've been so scared." The U.S. Consulate told them: "You have to leave. It's not safe for you here anymore."

Usafi immigrated to the U.S. last January thanks to the dogged efforts of his comrade-in-arms, Adrian Kinsella, an active-duty Marine captain who now attends the University of California, Berkeley School of Law.

Since then, they've led an intensive lobbying effort that stretched

from the Bay Area to Washington to help Usafi's family follow him out of harm's way. The family, which had been hiding in Pakistan, received the good news last month that their long-shot application to enter the United States under what's called the "humanitarian parole" program had been approved. But that also put them in even more jeopardy.

After learning that unknown people were looking for them, the family slipped across the border into Afghanistan. They drove 11 hours in three vehicles, then stayed secretly in Kandahar for two days, anxiously waiting for their flight. The day after they left Pakistan, Usafi said, people from "the government" came looking for them.

About 80 people worked on letter-writing and social-media campaigns that resulted in 13 congressional offices inquiring about the family. More than 93,000 people signed an online petition.

The tipping point was an appearance by Usafi on the HBO show "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver," which uses humor to shed light on serious issues. Within weeks, the wheels suddenly were in motion for Usafi's family to come to the U.S. The family now can stay in the country for one year as they apply for asylum.

Usafi said dearly for his service. His father was killed in 2009 after Usafi's work as a translator was discovered by the Taliban. Later, his youngest brother, Musameel, then 3, was kidnapped and Usafi had to pay a ransom of \$35,000 — his life savings — to secure his release.

FAITH



“So many times people feel alone and, hopefully, this lets people know that we care, that Holy Spirit cares. Lots of people are suffering, and sometimes the conversation gets emotional, on both sides.”

church volunteer Rosie Ritzman



PHOTOS BY JIM STEVENS, BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/TNS

Above: The Rev. Mathew Vellankal, left, places his hands on the head of Michael Ramacciotti, 11, and offers a prayer while Michael's mother, Jacquelin, looks on during drive-thru prayer service at Holy Spirit Church in Fremont, Calif., on Nov. 17. Top: Amy Wilhelm directs traffic at the start of the prayer service at the church.

Church offering drive-thru prayer for the heartsick and

BY CHRIS DE BENEDETTI/The Oakland (Calif.) Tribune

M.J. Johnson drove onto the Holy Spirit Catholic Church parking lot and, as her car's motor idled and its headlights pierced the evening darkness, she prayed with a church volunteer, asking God to help her father as he grieves for his late wife.

"I always feel that God is all around us and, if you ask for help, God will try to help you," Johnson said, choking back tears afterward. "Prayer is such a powerful thing."

That sentiment predominated on a recent Monday night, when dozens of people parked their cars — or a bicycle, in one case — to participate in Holy Spirit's first-ever drive-thru prayer night.

"Think of it as 'God on the go,'" said the Rev. Mathew Vellankal, Holy Spirit's pastor. "We have drive-thru food and drive-thru coffee in our society. This is drive-thru prayer."

Vellankal said that a Florida parish was the first recently to offer drive-thru praying, and a quote from Pope Francis inspired him to bring the service to Fremont.

"Pope Francis says we should go where the people are," Vellankal said. "We live in a fast-paced society and if people don't have an hour to pray, they might have a few minutes. So we

want to offer a little comfort and solace to people who are extremely busy."

The church had been promoting drive-thru prayer through its newsletter and by word of mouth. Then parishioner Lulu Paul stood at the busy intersection of Fremont Boulevard and Central Avenue during the Monday evening rush hour waving a sign that read "Drive-Thru Prayer."

The ad hoc marketing worked, as a handful of church volunteers greeted about 35 visitors during the program's inaugural hour, taking a few minutes to pray with each motorist.

Some prayed for divine intervention to heal an ailing family member, volunteers said. Others were stressed over life's daily struggles and seemed in need of the human touch of talking with a stranger about their troubles.

Sometimes, the short prayer session left both visitor and volunteer in tears, said church volunteer Rosie Ritzman.

"So many times people feel alone and, hopefully, this lets people know that we care, that Holy Spirit cares," she said. "Lots of people are suffering, and sometimes the conversation gets emotional, on both sides."

The church intends to continue the drive-thru prayer sessions indefinitely, 5 to 6 p.m. weeknights.

Holy Spirit Catholic Church, founded in 1886, is one of the area's oldest churches. With 5,000 parishioners, it's also one of the largest, church leaders said.

Vellankal said he wants to keep trying new ways to bring prayer to people because he suspects that even devout parishioners can get tired of church routine.

"We try to go to the level of the people," he said. "We want to reach out to all of those around us with peace and love."

'GOD ON THE GO'

WEEKEND



Charli XCX's 'Sucker' shows attitude

Page 37



& SWORDS SANDALS

Bale, Edgerton star in 'Exodus,' a faceoff of biblical proportions

Page 24



Sweet retreat

Café Krummel's treats tempt all who find them in Kaiserslautern

After Hours, Page 29



Character dining

Hello Kitty fans: Gobble up this tasty experience before it's gone

Travel, Page 35

WEEKEND: GADGETS & CHARTS

GADGET WATCH

May the grill fork be with you this holiday

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

What do you want for Christmas? What should we get your mother? Will they like this or that? Did we get your dad anything yet?

Whatever your question is this holiday season, I have the answers here.

Darth Vader is unlikely to show up at your house to cook a steak, but the next best thing can be the Star Wars Darth Vader Lightsaber BBQ fork.

It was created by ThinkGeek with a handle that looks like Vader's lightsaber hilt. A hanging ring is built into the handle for storing the stainless steel fork.

It's big enough to pick up any piece of meat, measuring 20 inches long with over a 3-inch tines.

Online: ThinkGeek.com, \$99.99

The V-Moda XS headphones are made with a CliqFold hinge connecting the padded ear cups, which

allows them to fold up into the store in the included hard case.

V-Moda designed and tested them to withstand up to 60 drops on concrete, and the steelflex headband is virtually indestructible.

The big and powerful sound comes from 40mm dual-diaphragm drivers in each ear.

Other features include a 45-degree plug and tangle-free cords, which include a microphone that can be used with Apple iPhone, iPad, Android and Windows hand-held devices.

Online: v-moda.com/XS; special pricing of \$189 for the rest of the year, available in matte black metal or white silver

WhiteWall online photo lab, which likes to call itself an online Art Market, can take your priceless digital images and make amazing prints on acrylic, aluminum, canvas or (of course) paper.

On its user-friendly website, upload an image and design what you want using what seems like an endless amount of choices.

I recently tested the site with ease and found to print on acrylic. The finished product was amazing, and far exceeded my expectations.



Anything you choose will be handled with care. The customer service was great, and the company guarantees competitive pricing.

Prices vary depending on service; you'll get the price at the start of the process when you choose your printing or framing option.

Online: us.whitewall.com

The PressReader app gives you a choice of more than 2,800 newspapers and magazines from 100-plus countries delivered to your house daily without getting out of bed to open the front door.

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You can personalize your experience within the apps' publications by special interests, publication type, language or country.

I personally love the bookmark feature to automatically sync articles across my devices (iPad, iPhone, MacBook Pro) for later reading.

Online: pressreader.com; prices start at \$99 per issue up to \$29.95 per month to unlimited access

The NewerTech NuGreen LED desk lamp might just make you excited about this basic piece of furniture. It's designed with a modern aluminum



The NewerTech NuGreen LED Desk Lamp produces a bright white light similar to natural daylight, and uses only 3.6 watts of power.



style and features a flexible neck for easy positioning. One end has a weighted base to keep it in place, and the other has the light with 50 LEDs for up to 45,000 hours of use (more than 5½ years).

The bright white light is similar to natural daylight, which is easier on your eyes and only uses an electric bill-friendly 3.6 watts of power.

Online: eshop.macsales.com; \$49.99

Evutek Corporation's new Karbon S and SI Kevlar cases for the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus are among the thinnest and strongest cases you'll see, and the eye-catching designs make them even better.

The Kevlar material does not contain any metal properties and will not affect cellular, GPS or Wi-Fi in the handsets. Structurally it's made with a shock-absorbing inner layer, fused with a Kevlar outer shell.

As for the thickness, when you combine the new iPhone 6 with a 0.7mm thin Karbon S case it equals the thickness of an iPhone 5 device without a case.

And your phone will still look great! Online: evutek.com; prices start at \$39.99 and are also available for select Samsung and iPads

The Monster SuperStar portable wireless speaker is promoted as "size does matter," and in this case they mean that good things sometimes come in tiny packages.

Considering its size of 5 by 2.55 by 0.86 inches (0.5 pounds), it's smaller than many smartphones, and you'll be as



The Monster SuperStar portable wireless speaker is pocket-sized but powerful.



The new Karbon S and SI Kevlar cases for the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus from Evutek Corporation are among the thinnest and strongest cases you'll find.

ITUNES MUSIC

Top 10 songs on the iTunes Store for Dec. 10:

1. "Blank Space," Taylor Swift
2. "The Hanging Tree," James Newton Howard
3. "Take Me to Church," Hozier
4. "Uptown Funk (feat. Bruno Mars)," Mark Ronson
5. "Lips Are Movin'," Meghan Trainor
6. "Make It Rain," Ed Sheeran
7. "The Blower's Daughter," Matt McAndrew
8. "Jealous," Nick Jonas
9. "I'm Not the Only One," Sam Smith
10. "Shake It Off," Taylor Swift

— Compiled by TNS

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The most streamed tracks on Spotify from Dec. 2-7 via Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter and Spotify.

1. "Take Me to Church," Hozier
2. "Love Me Harder," Ariana Grande
3. "I'm Not the Only One," Sam Smith
4. "Thinking Out Loud," Ed Sheeran
5. "The Heart Wants What It Wants," Selena Gomez
6. "Uptown Funk," Mark Ronson
7. "I Don't F--- With You," Big Sean
8. "Jealous," Nick Jonas
9. "Stay With Me," Sam Smith
10. "Tuesday (feat. Drake)," I LOVE M-KONNEN

— Compiled by The Associated Press

ITUNES MOVIES

Top 10 movies downloaded from the iTunes Store for Dec. 10:

1. "Dawn of the Planet of the Apes"
2. "Guardians of the Galaxy"
3. "The Maze Runner"
4. "The Hundred-Foot Journey"
5. "Under the Skin"
6. "22 Jump Street"
7. "The November Man"
8. "Elf"
9. "Where Is Where I Leave You"
10. "The Giver"



— Compiled by TNS

VIDEO GAMES

Game Informer rank the Top 10 PlayStation 3 games for December:

1. "Dragon Age: Inquisition," Electronic Arts
2. "Game of Thrones Episode One - Iron from Ice," Telltale Games
3. "For Cry 4," Ubisoft
4. "Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare," Activision
5. "The Evil Within," Bethesda
6. "Skylanders: Trap Team," Activision
7. "LittleBigPlanet 3," Sony Computer Entertainment
8. "Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor," Warner Bros.
9. "Assassin's Creed: Rogue," Ubisoft
10. "Kingdom Hearts HD 2.5 Remix," Square Enix

— Compiled by TNS

APPS

Top 5 new free apps for Dec. 10:

- ANDROID
1. Candy Crush Soda Saga, King
 2. Deck Heroes, IGG.COM
 3. My Talking Angel, Outfit7
 4. Godus, DeNA Corp.
 5. Fun Run 2 — Multiplayer Race, Diribit
- APPLE
1. Trivia Crack, Etermax
 2. Facebook Messenger, Facebook, Inc.
 3. Facebook, Facebook, Inc.
 4. Instagram, Instagram, Inc.
 5. YouTube, Google, Inc.

— Compiled by TNS

WEEKEND

CHECK IT OUT

Events, entertainment and other ways to fill your free time

1

Charli's
no angel

You've probably heard Charli XCX's voice, even if you've never heard of her. This young Brit import provided the hook for Iggy Azalea's ubiquitous "I'm So Fancy," and contributed to Icona Pop's "I Love It." Charli XCX also had a legitimately monster hit of her own with the catchy "Boom Clap," which got a boost from its spot on the soundtrack for "The Fault in Our Stars."

The 22-year-old gets her own moment in the sun on Tuesday when her second major label album, "Sucker," drops. Give it a listen and see if she's got a solid center underneath the sassy exterior.

• **Profile of Charli XCX and review of "Sucker" on Page 37.**



Courtesy of
Atlantic Records

2

'Girlfriend's Guide' finds
humor amid life's chaos

New show "Girlfriend's Guide to Divorce," starring Lisa Edelstein ("House"), attempts to straddle that tricky line between being funny and moving without resorting (too much, at least) to crass humor. It mostly succeeds, thanks to the leadership of series creator Marti Noxon, whose previous involvements include "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," "Grey's Anatomy" and "Mad Men." Though the show's cast is more beautiful and light-skinned than the general population, its themes are universal.

• **Read more on Page 39, and watch episodes on Sundays on AFN-Family.**

3

It's not too late to get
in touch with Santa

Kids of all ages, there's no need to wait until Christmas Eve to interact with Santa. Several organizations, from the U.S. Postal Service to a number of websites, will put you in touch with the Jolly Old Elf. He can reply to letters; you can get a DVD greeting; you can live chat with him — it's a wonder Santa has any time to plan for his big night.

• **More information and details on Page 41.**



4

Ad brings WWI
Christmas Truce alive

The British supermarket chain Sainsbury's has taken the story of the Christmas Truce and turned it into a nearly four-minute television ad. It's wildly popular online — it's gotten almost 14.5 million views on YouTube — and if you've seen it, you know why. The true tale of British and German soldiers in WWI meeting in no man's land and striking up an impromptu soccer match 100 years ago this Christmas is a heartstring-tugger. The ad's final message — Christmas is for sharing — is one that's worth remembering.

• **Read more on Page 31, and watch the ad at tinyurl.com/ougp2j6.**

WEEKEND: MOVIES

By GINA MCINTYRE
Los Angeles Times

In Ridley Scott's lavish new 3-D epic, "Exodus: Gods and Kings," rivers run with blood, ancient seas part with tsunami force, and Christian Bale delivers a portrait of Moses as a passionate, hot-tempered holy man who struggles with his relationship to God, depicted as an androgynous, strong-willed child.

It's a radical departure from Cecil B. DeMille's Hollywood standard-bearer "The Ten Commandments," and even months before the release of their costly new popcorn retelling of the Old Testament story, Scott, Bale and Australian actor Joel Edgerton, who stars as the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses, were bracing themselves for a wallop of a reaction.

"The reception, I think, that you're going to get to this is extremes," Bale said. "The film is one of extremes."

Maybe it was his time playing one of civilization's most famous prophets, but Bale's prediction has proved spot-on. From the outset, "Exodus: Gods and Kings" generated controversy over its choice of two Caucasian actors to play the leads. That particular point of contention flared up again just days ago after Fox's Chief Executive Rupert Murdoch tried to defend the movie on Twitter by asking "Since when are Egyptians not white?"

It remains to be seen how audiences might react to 11-year-old Isaac Andrews as the God who instructs Moses to leave his family and save the Hebrews from enslavement.

But seated in a suite at a Beverly Hills hotel with his leading men on a late September morning, Scott seemed relaxed and in high spirits, satisfied with the creative decisions that conjured his "Exodus." He set out to chronicle Moses' journey from privileged son of Egypt to embattled leader of the Israelites with enough blockbuster bombast to impress the Almighty himself.

Scott wasn't interested in merely repeating the cinematic triumphs of the past or offering moviegoers a sermon.

"I didn't want audiences to feel they were going to go and see a Bible movie," said Scott, 77. "I wanted audiences to feel they were going to see a film about two men who wouldn't normally be brothers who are in competition with each other. One happens to be the pharaoh that will be, the other one is his friend and closest ally, and they come apart at the seams over the question of the nature of his nationality."



Christian Bale portrays Moses in "Exodus: Gods and Kings."



Picture courtesy of 20th Century Fox/IFP

Ridley Scott's 'Exodus' casts wide net of spectacle, family

If his approach works, "Exodus" could qualify as one of Scott's biggest miracles, an end-of-the-year counterpoint to Darren Aronofsky's sci-fi-inflected "Noah," which played to a somewhat mixed reaction in the spring. Scott's specialty is spectacle; he dreams in wide screen, and it wasn't so long ago he resurrected the sword and sandals genre to best picture acclaim with 2000's "Gladiator."

"What I do for a living, I secretly enjoy most doing things where part of the task is to create universes," Scott said. "It's hard. I always think the universe that the actors work in is more than the proscenium, it's one of the most important characters."

Producer Peter Chernin, who oversaw the movie business at Fox for years before launching his own venture, initially reached out to Scott to gauge his interest in directing the film. Scott's relationship with the studio dates to his 1979 breakthrough, "Alien," and he's made numerous other movies with the studio.

Reading the "Exodus: Gods and Kings" script, the director said he was intrigued by the scope and scale of the production but also "gobsomacked" by what he didn't know about Moses.

Bale too said he was surprised by what he turned up in his extensive readings to prepare for the role, which included studying the Old Testament, the Torah, the Koran and Jonathan Kirsch's book "Moses: A Life."

"This guy had a really tumultuous life," he said. "In his early years, he was absolutely prone to all

the temptations and passions of all of us in everyday life. Even in his relationship with God, he wrestles, he fights, he tries to ignore him... You don't see that relationship very often. As you learn in the film, that's the meaning of Israelite, somebody who wrestles with God."

At the outset of the film, Moses hasn't yet learned the truth about his Hebrew identity. He's a warrior prince concerned with more earthly travails, including a pending siege of 15,000 soldiers against a Hittite army at the Battle of Kadesh. It's only after they claim victory that Moses, on a visit to the slave quarters near the marble quarry, encounters the scholar Nun (Ben Kingsley), who explains to him the circumstances of his birth.

Rumors spread throughout the kingdom that the favored son of the Pharaoh Seti (John Turturro) is, in fact, the descendant of slaves. Ramses banishes Moses from the kingdom, and he eventually finds shelter and a bride in the village of Midian. After seven years he's also confronted by a demanding God, who insists that Moses return to Egypt and secure the freedom of the Hebrews.

Edgerton, known for such films as "Warrior" and "The Great Gatsby," said he wanted Ramses to come across as a sympathetic figure, despite his willingness to perpetuate the injustices against the Hebrews.

"I'm a real sucker, and I think audiences are too, for family relationships, particularly when you reduce that to relationships between brothers," Edgerton said. "I have a very strong relationship with my brother and of the pride involved for Ramses of having a father who quite openly favors someone else, listens to



Joel Edgerton plays Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses.

someone else, holds more weight in another person's opinion..."

Although Scott had previously mounted a religious epic of a different sort with his Crusades costume drama "Kingdom of Heaven," "Exodus" was by far a more difficult film to make.

Shot in just 74 days, the \$140-million production visited England's Pinewood Studios, in addition to Almeria in southern Spain and Fuerteventura, one of the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa.

It took more than 1,500 visual effects shots to digitally bolster the ranks of the Hebrews and to help authentically render plagues of hail, locusts and frogs; 400 actual amphibians were brought to set at one point. And then there was the movie's most visually dramatic set piece, the parting of the Red Sea, which Scott said was inspired by a tsunami believed to have been triggered by an underwater earthquake off the Italian coast circa 3000 B.C.

"I mostly don't lose sleep when I'm making a film," said Scott. "This one, I lost a little bit of sleep."

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In: Digital SD: Big Hero 6 (PG) - Sun 13:30

In: Digital SD: The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (PG-13)
Thur 18:00, Sat 20:30, Sat 13:30, Sun 13:30, 17:00, 20:00, Sun - Wed 16:00 (PG-13)

In: Digital SD: Penguins From Madagascar (PG) - Fri 16:00, Sat 13:30, 17:00, 20:00, Sun 13:30, 17:00, 20:00, Sun - Wed 17:00, 20:00

In: Digital SD: The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (PG-13) - Fri 15:45, Sat 18:00, Sun 13:30, Mon - Wed 16:00

In: Digital SD: Penguins From Madagascar (PG) - Thur 16:00, Sat 15:45, Mon - Wed 16:00

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1 (PG-13) - Thur 18:00, 20:30, Fri & Sat 17:30, 20:00, 22:30, Sun 17:30, 20:00, 22:30

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WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Take the good with the bad

'Halo: Master Chief Collection' features great single-player; multiplayer stumbles



By MICHAEL DARNELL
Stars and Stripes

By now, you have likely seen the "Halo: Master Chief Collection" sitting on store shelves.

This collection of every numbered "Halo" game, updated with shiny new graphics and packed with a plethora of features, tweaks and additions, is certainly an enticing package.

After all, 343 Studios could have just repackaged each game separately and made truckloads of money by reselling them individually to the Xbox One crowd. A collection of all the best "Halo" games almost seems like too good of a deal. So, this is an easy recommendation, right?

Sadly, as is the case with most things, what seems to be too good to be true often is.

To understand the disappointment that is "Halo: MCC," it's important to know that "Halo" has always been two distinct games. On one side, there is the story-based campaign that chronicles the increasingly over-the-top adventures of Master Chief as he shoots his way through hordes of aliens.

Here in the "Master Chief Collection," the campaigns of Halo 1-4 are reproduced perfectly. The same soaring score punctuates the familiar, galaxy-spanning story and the tight, frenetic combat that made "Halo" a household name still fits like an old favorite pair of shoes. If you've played "Halo" before, there aren't any big changes to the campaign.

The visuals in "Halo: Combat Evolved"

("Halo 1") and "Halo 2" have been given a new, updated look that goes above and beyond what I would have expected from a collection of older games. The textures, character and weapon models, along with the lighting, have all been redone and the difference, especially with the first two "Halo" games, is amazing. Perhaps the coolest feature of the "Master Chief Collection" is the ability to swap between these updated visuals and the original graphics with a press of a button, no menus required.

Players can start from the beginning and work their way through to the conclusion of the controversial "Halo 4," or pick and choose which missions from any of the games they'd like to play. There is even a playlist feature that allows players the chance to build their own "greatest hits" of missions. That means if you still want to experience the rest of the storyline but never want to, say, fight through the library again, you can make that happen.

If the review ended here, the "Master Chief Collection" would be given an A+ and possibly game of the year. The collection of all of the best "Halo" games (minus "ODST") with the playlists and graphical updates make this a simple no-brainer for first-person shooter fans, Xbox One owners or anybody who just wants a good, solid game to spend some time with.

But as I mentioned earlier, "Halo" has always been two experiences, and it's with the arguably more-popular multiplayer modes that "Master Chief Collection" drops the ball. Hard.

The term "broken" is thrown around quite a bit these days, and it's often used incorrectly. A bug that appears every so often doesn't normally break the game. A lost connection here and there happens. I give a good amount of leeway to bugs, unless they truly break the game. So when I say the multiplayer modes found in "MCC" are broken, you understand that it's not something I say lightly.

To start with, matchmaking is a nightmare. Long waits can be expected, but the waits here are excessive and punctuated with frequent drops and stalled connections. I once timed how long it took to try to join a game, and I shut off the timer at 18 minutes.

The development studio is aware of the problems, and has even issued an apology for the poor online experience, so the problem is widespread. If I were reviewing "MCC" on its online merits alone, it would be a D-, at best. Sure, there are nearly infinite modes of play, spanning all of the greatest maps in the series, but if you can't actually play on them, they might as well not exist.

So, that's where "Halo: Master Chief Collection" sits. If you don't care about the online modes, this is an easy purchase. It's by far the best ensemble game we've seen. If you're only in for the online multiplayer, I would highly recommend waiting until the studio has pushed out the promised patches before buying.

Bottom Line: "Halo: The Master Chief Collection" is nearly perfect with its single-player modes, and horribly flawed with its online components.

Grade: A+ for campaign, D- for online multiplayer

Platform: Xbox One

Online: xbox.com/halo

Perhaps the coolest feature of the "Master Chief Collection" is the ability to swap between these updated visuals and the original graphics with a press of a button, no menus required.

Microsoft



Many more staff-written game reviews at stripes.com/military-life

WEEKEND

Europe

THE EUROPE EXPERIENCE



Courtesy of Ross Jukes Photography, UK

Ross Jukes, a photographer, resident and huge fan of Birmingham, England, captured this idyllic view of his city's Frankfurt Christmas Market and Craft Fair — a decade-old favorite of city residents and visitors from all over Europe. Jukes invites readers to check out more of his artistic shots of his home town and the market at [facebook.com/RossJukesPhotography](https://www.facebook.com/RossJukesPhotography).

BE DAZZLED:

Frankfurt Christmas Market and Craft Fair

From 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. through Dec. 22, the German-style Frankfurt Christmas Market and Craft Fair in Birmingham, England, bustles with over 180 stalls selling gifts, jewelry, decorations, handmade toys, tasty German food and the ever-popular spiced wine, *Glühwein*. The town claims its market is the largest outdoor market in the United Kingdom.

Adjacent to the Frankfurt Christmas Market, the Christmas Craft Fair hosts Birmingham's traders, selling their own selection of hand-crafted items, created by local artisans.

The Frankfurt Market is centered in Victoria Square in front of the Council House and stretches to the Rotunda. The Craft Market is in Chamberlain Square in front of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and continues through to Centenary Square.

Organizers ask drivers to use the Town Hall, Paradise Circus, NIA, Snow Hill, Markets or Dudley Street car parks. Plan a visit by public transportation at networkwestmids.com. The market's website is birmingham.gov.uk/frankfurtmarket.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Christmas Valley

The German state of Thuringia is associated with nature, forests and winter sports, making it ideally suited to host an outdoorsy Christmas event. This weekend only, its Holzland region is poised to welcome visitors to an event known as Christmas Valley, when the beauty spot will be transformed into a magical, fairy-tale world populated by witches, robbers, knights, rascals and other costumed characters.

The eight old mills scattered through the five-mile valley create an atmospheric backdrop along which visitors are invited to make their way by foot. En route will be glass-blowers, candle-makers and other craftsmen, a sled dog camp, tepees, pony riding corral, petting zoo, fairy-tale world and live music. Those who get chilly can warm up next to a campfire.

Although crowds will no doubt be found at the stands by the mills, hiking from station to station will provide fresh air and elbow room. As dusk falls, visitors will carry torches to light their way. Children are encouraged to bring their own homemade lanterns.

At 3 p.m. on both days, a parade will set forth from one of the valley's points of entry, the Meuschensmühle. The procession will make its merry way through the valley and finish up on its opposite end at the Rob-



Karen Bradbury

See the Europe Traveler blog at stripes.com/travel/europe-travel

ertsmühle at about 5 p.m.

Adult entry to the valley costs 5 euros (about \$6.15); children enter free. The price includes parking fees and use of a shuttle bus to return to the parking area. Visitors are welcome from 10 a.m. on both days. On Saturday evening, a side program will be offered at both entry points into the valley. Activities conclude at 6 p.m. Sunday. Robertsmühle is a two-hour drive north of Grafenwöhr. More information is available at weihnachtstal.de (German only).

Beware the Krampus!

Had enough of Jolly Old Saint Nick? Meet his evil other half, the Krampus. A demon with pagan roots, his name is derived from the word for claw, and he's recognizable by his sharp fangs, shaggy hair and horns. The beast carries a bell and chains, along

with birch branches perfect for beating naughty children.

Krampus, who usually travel in groups, will descend upon Munich's Christmas market on Sunday starting at 3 p.m. From the Christkindlmarkt on the Marienplatz, the demonic group will make its way through the pedestrian zone, along the Rosenstrasse, across Sternplatz and to Rindermarkt, winding up back at its starting point some 1½ hours later. The Krampus' mission on this day is to show off their costumes and traditions, not to torture children. The Krampus will make a second appearance at the same spot at 4 p.m. Dec. 21. Find more details at tinyurl.com/mnscuz.

Ski race in Mayrhofen

Although it's too late to participate in Saturday's winter opening event at the Tyrolian resort area of Mayrhofen, Austria, spectators will be able to enjoy watching the action unfold.

Rise & Fall pits 50 teams of four against one another in a dash up and down the mountain. Each athlete on the team competes in one specific discipline. The race starts with the athlete taking on the ski touring portion of the trail ascending what's normally a downhill run and passing the baton to a paraglider.

Upon flying to the designated landing place, the paraglider hands the baton to a mountain biker, who pedals uphill, where



COURTESY OF B. ROEMMELT/München Tourismus

You'd better watch out! The scary Krampus descend upon the Christmas market in Munich, Germany, on Sunday.

he or she meets the last team member, whose mission is to ski or board across the finish line first. Each competitor makes either an ascent or descent of 430 meters. The winning team bags 7,000 euros in cash.

The race starts at 2 p.m. The finish line is within walking distance of the base station of the Ahorn lift. It's free to watch, and spectators are promised a top-class acrobatic show before and after the race. Live music, a break-dancing show and after-parties cap off the day. Learn more at riseandfall.at.

Bastogne anniversary

Every year, the Belgian municipality of Bastogne com-

memorates World War II's Battle of the Bulge and the American soldiers who defended the town from German forces. This year's celebrations are special because they will mark the 70th anniversary of the battle. Activities will feature the usual elements of the commemoration, including Saturday's walks around the town's defensive perimeter.

Marchers will depart from 8 to 9:30 a.m. from the Center Sportif and walk 8, 10 or 20 kilometers. Participation costs 6 euros (about \$7.38), and marchers receive a patch and a hot drink en route. The parade departs from Bastogne Barracks at 2 p.m. and makes its way along the Grand'Rue. Nuts will be thrown from the Town Hall at 3:15 p.m.

On Friday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday at 5:30 and 8:30 p.m., visitors can experience a sound-and-light spectacle honoring fighters from Texas A&M University, which sent more than 20,000 students into the battle. The spectacle will be accompanied by projections against the Mardasson Monument and thematic "tableaux" highlighting key moments in the battle and retracing the lives of five of the "Aggies" who fought there.

The spectacle is free to view and precedes Sunday's opening of the exhibition "From Texas to Bastogne" at the Bastogne War Museum, which will run through Aug. 31, 2016. Learn more at bastognemuseum.be.



Looking for even more to do? For additional events, concerts and activities, go to stripes.com/military-life

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe

Try a museum for amusement

Shun the cold and warm up to some culture

By NANCY MONTGOMERY

Stars and Stripes

So many terrific movies to see in the next few weeks! "Birdman." "Foxcatcher." "Nightcrawler." "Boyhood."

But military types overseas won't be able to see them. They're not the kind of blockbuster movies booked into base theaters. If they play in, say, Germany or Italy, they'll play months later, and they'll be dubbed.

So scratch attending the cinema as something to do in the cold, dark months when you're at the tip of the spear.

How to while away the weary hours? Head for a museum. Our NATO allies are crazy about museums and provide all sorts, even in small cities, for what are usually nominal entrance fees.

Vicenza, Italy, for example, has eight museums you can visit for a total of 15 euros, and you get a week to do them all.

The most famous is the Teatro Olimpico. The theater was designed by Andrea Palladio, the Vicenza-born Renaissance architectural genius beloved by Thomas Jefferson, among others, whose influence is seen all over the U.S. capital, including the Capitol building.

It was completed after Palladio's death, in 1585, with a trompe-l'oeil stage set designed by Vincenzo Scamozzi to give the appearance of long streets receding to a distant horizon for its inaugural performance.

That, in keeping with the Renaissance interest in classical Greece, was Sophocles' "Oedipus the King" — about the foster prince, who, as prophesy foretold, killed his father and married his mother, then blinded himself when he found out his true identity. Tragic, really.

The set was never changed; it is the oldest surviving stage set in existence in the world.

Nowadays, every spring, cheerful graduating Vicenza High seniors receive their diplomas there.

The theater is not only a marvel, it's also a quick shot of culture. You can be in, awed and out in maybe 20 minutes.

Right across the street — the Corso Palladio, Vicenza's main shopping street — is the town museum in the Palazzo Chiericati.



PHOTOS BY NANCY MONTGOMERY/Stars and Stripes

Antonio Balestra, a Veronan who lived from 1666 to 1740, painted this oil on canvas, titled "Virtue Defending Justice from Ignorance and Vice." It's an example of the baroque style, one that featured "extraordinary technical skill employed to amaze and thrill," according to museum curation.



The seats in the Teatro Olimpico, in addition to the stage set, date to the 1500s. For performances occasionally held there nowadays, patrons can soften the wooden bleachers with pillows.



The Teatro Olimpico, designed by Andrea Palladio and built in the late 1500s, has the oldest existing stage set in the world.

ti. Want to guess who designed it? Palladio was a busy man, and the building is considered his most spectacular private home.

In fact, the building and many of the museum's artworks serve the same purpose as movies do today.

"The history of European painting from the Renaissance through World War I is ... the history of power, wealth and social status," A.O. Scott, a critic for The New York Times wrote recently. "In the 20th century, film, theater and television tell the same story, as comedy, tragedy, thriller and

farce."

I spent 90 happy minutes wandering through the museum's four floors. I looked at Renaissance paintings, abstract sculptures, modern drawings and, taking up the entire top floor, a collection of books and artworks willed to the city by Giuseppe Roi, a wealthy resident of Vicenza and Rome, a marquis and an international jet-setter who died in 2009.

I was fascinated by the idea of Roi. A photograph taken at age 45 or 50 included in the exhibit showed him to be immensely

handsome, urbane and ultimately European. I was reminded of "The Great Beauty," the film that won last year's Oscar for best foreign film, about the Roman beau monde.

But it's the last artwork you see that makes you laugh out loud. It's a highly ornate fresco that covers the entire ceiling in a room all its own. At its center is a charioteer, his capes flying. You look up, and what you see is that the charioteer is not wearing pants. You are staring at the family jewels. And, like in the movies, they are larger than life.

montgomery.nancy@stripes.com



Stars and Stripes

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Address: Teatro Olimpico, Piazza Matteotti, 11, Vicenza V1, Italy; Palazzo Chiericati, Piazza Giacomo Matteotti, 37/39, 36100 Vicenza.

Both museums are located in Vicenz's Old Town at the end of the Corso Palladio, the city's main shopping street. Plenty of parking lots nearby.

TIMES

9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Sundays through Saturdays; closed Mondays.

COSTS

Each of eight museums sponsored by the city can be visited separately for different fees. But the best deal is to buy a card for all eight for 15 euros. You have a week to see all of them.

FOOD

Cafes abound just feet away.

INFORMATION

Teatro Olimpico's website: teatroolimpicovicenza.it/; it.html, with limited English option; Palazzo Chiericati's website: museicivicivicenza.it/en/.

— Nancy Montgomery



On a fresco in the Palazzo Chiericati, a charioteer wears a cape but no pants.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe

After Hours: Germany

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Café Krummel is not the kind of place you stumble upon while shopping in Kaiserslautern.

It's a bit off the beaten path, on a drab narrow street with a funny name, inside a small store front a few blocks from the downtown pedestrian zone.

Perhaps it's the smell wafting out onto Gasstrasse of freshly baked croissants and cakes oozing with butter and cream that draws them in.

Or it could be the reputation one family has built across three generations of expert bakers.

On a recent Thursday at about midday, a steady flow of customers breezed into the café. Some sat at one of the small tables off to the side for a meal or cup of coffee; others queued at the glass display case, the savory contents of which beckon like a drug to anyone with an insatiable sweet tooth.

Other Martin Krummel, who has baking in his blood and crumbs for a name, says the majority of customers come back again and again because they know what they want.

I might have been the only one in the café at that moment who felt like I had discovered something new. On a recommendation, I ended up at Café Krummel. And I can say unequivocally that I'll be back.

The café's focus is pastries, cake and chocolate.

Krummel is a third-generation German master pastry chef. His family has run the café in Kaiserslautern since 1926. At 18, Krummel left Kaiserslautern to sharpen his baking chops abroad, living and cooking in Switzerland and France before returning with his French wife, Elisabeth, and the couple's two children in 2008. Krummel's history explains why one finds many French specialties at the café, including eclairs and brioche on the weekends, starting on Friday afternoons; pastries made with mousse and croissants of several varieties.

"The small things which make life nice," Krummel says.

I could have just ordered platefuls of baked goods but since these reviews aim to include meals, I started with lunch. The food menu is small, with a few staples and daily lunch specials.

Breakfast items are available all day and can be ordered a la



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

A customer eyes the baked goods at Café Krummel in Kaiserslautern, Germany. One of the café's most popular cakes is called Byzantium. It's made with an almond paste and chocolate mousse.



Martin Krummel, a German master pastry chef, shows one of the many chocolate Santa Clauses he made for Germany's Saint Nikolaus Day on Dec. 6.

carte, such as scrambled eggs with ham for 3 euros (about \$3.78). Or for hungrier appetites, there's a hearty spread suggested for two: croissants, rolls, boiled eggs, cold cuts and cheese, honey butter, marmalade, orange juice and a pot of coffee or tea for 24 euros (about \$29.75).

I chose the day's special. For starters, I had a soup of barley and potato in a thick brown sauce — perfect on a dreary, cold day. Next up were three generously sized potato pancakes with a side of applesauce. While the potato pancakes were tasty, the applesauce was divine. It was the first applesauce I've had that tasted



Some of the many varieties of sweets offered at Café Krummel, which specializes in pastries, cakes and chocolates.

like my grandmother's. Josephine Gallagher was legendary in our family for her sweet yet tart cinnamon-infused applesauce that made Mott's taste like pickle juice. Elisabeth Krummel said they use several varieties of apples from their garden to make the café's applesauce. My meal, including a cappuccino, cost only 9.60 euros.

Not wanting to miss the best part of Café Krummel, I doggie-bagged two of the pancakes. From a display of chocolates that included more than 30 varieties, Martin Krummel hand-picked eight chocolates for me to sample. Krummel makes his own chocolates and likes to experiment with flavors. The more unusual varieties I tried were filled with a lemongrass, jasmine, or anise and honey ganache. My favorites included the dark chocolate with raspberry ganache, the cinnamon chocolate and one with a cappuccino-flavored center.

I only had to close my eyes and it was as if I were in heaven.

svan.jennifer@stripes.com

Chicken piccata requires little prep

BY LINDA GASSENHEIMER
Miami Herald

Here's a quick version of an Italian classic, chicken with a white wine, lemon and caper sauce. Using thin chicken cutlets cuts the cooking time.

The thin cutlets take about 2 minutes per side to cook. To keep the thin cutlets juicy, try not to overcook the chicken. It will continue to cook slightly when removed from the heat. A meat thermometer should read 165 degrees.

Boneless chicken breasts can be used instead of cutlets. Pound them flat to about ½-inch thick.

CHICKEN PICCATA

Ingredients:

2½ tablespoons cornstarch, divided
½ cup water plus 3 tablespoons water
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
¾ pound chicken cutlets (about ½-inch thick)
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 cup sliced mushrooms
1 teaspoon minced garlic
½ cup dry white wine
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons drained capers
2 tablespoons chopped parsley (optional)

Directions:

Mix ½ tablespoon cornstarch with the 3 tablespoons water and set aside. Place remaining 2 tablespoons cornstarch on a plate and sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Add chicken and roll in the cornstarch, making sure all sides are coated. Heat oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken and brown 2 minutes per side. A meat thermometer should read 165 degrees. Transfer to a plate and add the mushrooms and garlic to the skillet. Sauté 2 minutes or until mushrooms are soft. Spoon mushrooms over chicken. Add the white wine to the skillet, scraping up the brown bits in the bottom of the skillet. Add the remaining ½ cup water. Bring to a boil and cook 2 minutes. Stir the cornstarch and water and add to the skillet. Cook, stirring constantly, until the sauce is thickened, about 3 minutes. Add the lemon juice, capers and parsley (if using) to the sauce and spoon over the chicken.

Makes 2 servings, 341 calories per serving, 24 percent from fat, 3.2 g fat (1.6 g saturated), 4.5 g monounsaturated, 126 mg cholesterol, 40 g protein, 12.7 g carbohydrates, 1 g fiber, 325 mg sodium.

CAFÉ KRUMMEL

Address: Gasstrasse 37, Kaiserslautern 67655.

Times: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays, closed Tuesdays.

Costs: A la carte breakfast items start at about 2 euros; daily specials cost about 5 euros to 7 euros.

Attire: Casual.

Menu: German only, but the wait staff speaks some English. Pastries, rolls, chocolates and cakes can be ordered from the glass display case.

Information: Telephone: (+49) (0)631-92492. Reservations are recommended for Sundays, usually the café's busiest day.

—Jennifer H. Svan

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



A woman cooks in a restaurant window near Topkapi Palace in Istanbul.



Tourists in Istanbul will have plenty of chances to buy roasted corn at street vendors.



A colorful Turkish Delight confection sits in a shop window in Istanbul.



Turkish pomegranates on a juice stand make a colorful mosaic.

ISTANBUL'S EATS ON THE STREETS

Walks take foodie visitors to hidden taste treats in one of the world's most culinary-rich cities

By ELLEN CREAGER
Detroit Free Press

At a cramped shop on the edges of the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, Turkey, I balance a small white plate and fork in my hand. Rain pours outside while people push in the front door, a mass of humid, damp bodies all waiting for caramel custard called *trilice*. Men shout sharp orders. Money is exchanged. Forks clink on the white counters.

I manage two bites. Delicious. "Now we go to another favorite place for sage tea," says guide Senem Pastoressa. She opens the door to the rain, then speeds off down the winding cobblestone alley, five tourists hurrying after her under insufficient umbrellas. We turn the corner to a covered open-air tea shop. Men smoke hookah water pipes along one wall. We sit on red sofas under an awning and drink sage tea with lemon out of tulip-shaped cups. When, after 5 hours and 11 stops on the streets of Istanbul, this is a quiet coda to the culinary walk offered by Istanbul-based Culinary Backstreets.

The company was started by Americans Ansel Mullins and Yigal Schleifer five years ago as a food blog, Istanbul Eats (istanbuleats.com), to share authentic, tasty local restaurants with visitors. Now, its culinary walks

KNOW & GO

Culinary Backstreets tours, Istanbul, offers group tours of about five to seven people. "Culinary Backstreets of the Bazaar Quarter" costs \$125 per person; other tours are similarly priced (culinary-backstreets.com/culinary-walks/istanbul).

have spread to cities in Europe, South America and China. Appealing to younger travelers and foodies, the Istanbul walks explore hidden spots in one of the most culturally rich cities in the world. Along the way, you absorb Turkey's many influences from the Mediterranean, Asia, the Black Sea and the Middle East. Although Turkey's tourism as a whole is growing quickly, with a record 30 million visitors between January and September (an amazing number considering the instability of its regional neighbors), Pastoressa says culinary tourism to Turkey is still in its infancy.

"It's becoming a thing, but tourism here is mostly cultural," she says. "People want to come to Turkey because it is a place that is different but not difficult. They come and are surprised." Culinary Backstreets offers

several different food tours of Istanbul. I took one focusing on hidden dining spots near the Grand Bazaar. The Bazaar dates from 1461 and is a warren of 5,000 shops. Some describe it as the world's oldest mall. On its red tile rooftops was filmed the opening sequence of the 2012 James Bond movie "Skyfall."

So what do we eat? Everything. We climb curving flights of stairs, go through secret tunnels, cut through little shops, and meander through backstreet courtyards called *kons*. We crowd into restaurants so small they have only three tables. We even eat breakfast with a group of porters — men who cart and carry most of the goods into the winding bazaar lanes too small for vehicles. At one street stand, we eat grilled meat made of sweet breads — tasty. Another restaurant serves us flaky *borek* — phyllo dough pastries with meat, spinach or cheese.

At the restaurant Guvenc Konyali, it's beef and baby okra soup, a recipe from central Turkey. Then it's on to another spot for hummus and for *manti*, a white dumpling-like ravioli in a yogurt sauce. We eat *pak pide*, a type of Turkish pizza, covered with minced meat and Turkish cheese. At another place we have *kadayif*, a dessert of sugar, lemon and shredded phyllo.



PHOTOS BY ELLEN CREAGER/Detroit Free Press

The Culinary Backstreets walks in Istanbul are designed to lead visitors on an eating tour through the city's lesser-seen historic side streets and authentic markets. Here, a family stops for roasted chestnuts at a stand in Istanbul's old city.

Some tourists try Turkish coffee — thick, with grounds in the bottom of the cup.

Along the way, we see the back streets of the Grand Bazaar, the historic wholesale gold district, bridal district, silver district and leather district. We stop at a copper pot-making shop, Soy Turkiye, which is so famous it even makes pots of pure silver for royalty and billionaires.

Turkey is a grower of apricots and figs, hazelnuts, pistachios and olives. These and fresh vegetables — tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini — are featured in many dishes. Spices commonly used are red sumac, red pepper, oregano and cinnamon, but spices will not overwhelm you in

Turkish food.

Just one thing to take note of: This tour is not for vegetarians, vegans or people with food allergies. It is a sampler, so there is some meat — lamb or beef; many dishes may use meat-based liquids, and many desserts include every sweet thing plus wheat and dairy.

But the tour is offered with a happy stream of conversation from Pastoressa, who has been a guide for many years. She grew up in Turkey and has seen the food scene change a lot. You can get anything in Turkey these days, she says. The world is changing. The only thing her husband brought with him from Italy? His cappuccino maker.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Centenary brings re-enactment of Christmas truce

By MATT MILLHAM
Stars and Stripes

It's almost unthinkable today.

But on Christmas Day, 1914, just months after the outbreak of World War I, British and German soldiers along parts of the trenches that defined that war laid down their weapons, climbed tentatively into the no-man's land that separated their fighting positions and shared a moment of peace.

In Ploegsteert, Belgium, and a handful of other places along the Western Front, games of soccer broke out between the belligerents.

Though such civility became infrequent in the war's later years, this iconic moment lives on as a sign that humanity survives in even the most dire of circumstances.

What is known as the Christmas Truce has been brought to life for millions during its centennial year through a poignant Christmas commercial produced by British supermarket chain Sainsbury's in partnership with The Royal British Legion. The dramatization has become one of the hottest viral hits of 2014.

Beginning Dec. 19, re-enactors will attempt to re-create the conditions and comity of the

peaceful moment on one of the war's most futile battlefields.

In reconstructed trenches, re-enactors will spend three days eating, sleeping and carrying on as soldiers did a century ago in Ploegsteert, about two miles north of the French border.

That night, visitors are invited to a torchlight march to the Ploegsteert Wood Cemetery, followed by a "Last Post" ceremony. A Royal Marine concert at 6 p.m. Reservations are required. Tickets for the concert are 5 euros.

About eight miles south of the Belgian city of Ypres, the four-year fight around Ploegsteert between British and German armies was a bloody stalemate for much of the war. Still, there is much to see for those with an interest in World War I battlefields. The small town hosts a memorial to some 11,000 unknown dead from the British Commonwealth. There's also an interpretation center that explains the fight in the town, which still bears the scars of mines and trenches.

For information and reservations, call (+32) (0) 56-484000, email info@rememberplugstreet.com or go to plugstreet1418.be.

millham.matthew@stars.com
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A screengrab from the 2014 Sainsbury's Christmas television commercial made in partnership with The Royal British Legion commemorates the famous Christmas Truce of 1914, a series of unofficial cease fires along portions of the Western Front. The ad portrays British and German soldiers singing carols, playing soccer and exchanging small food gifts before returning to the trenches to fight.

Restaurant Directory

GERMANY

<p>Idar-Oberstein</p> <p><i>The original Spießkuchen</i> Restaurant Alte-Kastel Cafeteria Restaurant</p> <p>The place to go for the original open fire grilled Gaucho style steaks! Hauptstrasse 432 • 55743 Idar • Oberstein 06781-28059/367753 www.restaurant-alte-kastel.de</p>	<p>Mainz / Wiesbaden area</p> <p>Saytoun Cuisine Oriental Wilhelm Strasse 52 65183 Wiesbaden 0611-3086110</p>	<p>Mainz / Wiesbaden area</p> <p>PAPPELHAUS Steinmetzstrasse 2, 55252 Mainz-Kastel 06134-564969 Get our juicy Irish Angus Burger!</p>
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Hotel Directory

GERMANY

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WEEKEND

Pacific



UPCOMING CONCERTS

Japan

MICHAEL BUBLE: Tokyo, Feb. 6, 7 p.m., Budokan, 9,500-18,000 yen; 0570-00-3337.

SLASH FEATURING MYLES KENNEDY & THE CONSPIRATORS: Tokyo, Feb. 10, 7 p.m., Studio Coast, 8,000 yen standing; 03-3499-6669.

OK GO: Tokyo, Feb. 19, 7 p.m., Akasaka Blitz, 6,000 yen; 03-3444-6751.

MUSIQ SOULCHILD: Tokyo, Feb. 20, 7 & 9:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 11,000 yen; 03-3405-1133.

INCUBUS: Tokyo, March 6, 7 p.m. and March 7, 6 p.m., Toyosu Pit, 7,200 yen standing; 03-3475-9999.

JUDAS PRIEST: Tokyo, March 11, 7 p.m.,

Budokan, 8,000-9,800 yen; 03-3499-6669.

JURASSIC 5: Tokyo, April 14, 7:30 p.m., Toyosu Pit, 8,000 yen standing; 03-3444-6751.

South Korea

RED CHRISTMAS CONCERT: featuring Block B, DaeGukNamA, Tahiti and Ajaz: Incheon, Dec. 24, 7 a.m., the Namdong Gymnasium, 66,000-77,000-88,000 won; tinyurl.com/3e6rwhe.

KISS: Seoul, Dec. 26-27, Mapo Arts Center, Art Hall MAC, 55,000-66,000-77,000 won; tinyurl.com/3e6rwhe.

ED SHEEHAN: Seoul, March 8, 6 p.m., SK Olympic Handball Gymnasium, Olympic Park, 121,000-143,000 won; tinyurl.com/3e6rwhe.

Taylor Swift, who performed at the KIIS FM's Jingle Ball at the Staples Center on Dec. 5 in Los Angeles, will perform at the Tokyo Dome on May 5 and 6. For more: taylorswift-japantour.com.

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THE NEW SANNO

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific

WINTER ILLUMINATIONS

Events are as accurate as possible at press time. Since times or event schedules can change, please verify events before attending.

Japan

MIYAGASEKO LAKESIDE PARK (Kanagawa prefecture): Dec. 12, 5-10 p.m. and Dec. 13-25, 5-11 p.m.; 98.42-foot fir tree at Mominoki Hiroba (Fir Square); and shopping streets decorated with 600,000 lights; Miyagase Lakeside Park, Miyagase, Kiyokawa village.

OMOTE SANDO CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATION 2014 (Tokyo): Through Dec. 25, sunset-9 p.m.; decorated Kiyaki trees along Omote-Sando main street between Meiji Shrine entrance and Aoyama Street; 03-3406-0988.

KURIHAMA FLOWER PARK WINTER ILLUMINATION (Kanagawa prefecture): Through Dec. 25, 5-8 p.m.; decorated with 120,000 LEDs; 15-minute walk from JR Kurihama Station on Yokosuka Line or Keiikyū Kurihama Station; free; 046-833-8282.

ILLUMINATION AT FUJI-Q HIGHLAND (Yamanashi prefecture): Through March 29, closed Jan. 20 & Feb. 10; illumination with 55,000 lights at three ice skating rinks; skate all night Dec. 31; 5-6 p.m.; Nishihara, Fuji-Yoshida city; 1,400 yen adults, 800 yen kids; 1,000 yen shoe rental; fuji.jp.

LAGUNA WINTER FESTIVAL (Aichi prefecture): Through March 31, 5-10 p.m.; illumination with 3-D laser performances at Laguna Gamagori, the ocean theme park; 2,150 yen ages 12+; free shuttle from JR & Meitetsu Gamagori Stations; lagunatenbosch.co.jp.

South Korea

EVERLAND CHRISTMAS FANTASY (Gyeonggi province): Through Dec. 31; 46,000 won adult one-day pass; Jeondae-Everland Station (Ever Line), Exit 3; tinyurl.com/o489nmk; tinyurl.com/b58yqvp.

SEOULLAND CHRISTMAS PARTY: Through Dec. 31; enjoy romantic Christmas party and attractions including a magic show and performances; Seoul Grand park Station (Seoul Subway Line 4), Exit 2; 36,000 won adult one-day pass; tinyurl.com/l8wh5a.

BOSEONG GREEN TEA PLANTATION LIGHT FESTIVAL (South Jeolla province): Dec. 20-Jan. 25, 6-10 p.m.; lights, a Milky Way tunnel and more; Bojeon Daewon, Dahyangguk Pavilion Observatory; free; tinyurl.com/l8rouyv.

THE LE PETIT PRINCE STAR LIGHT FESTIVAL (Gyeonggi province): Through Feb. 27, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; illumination with ornaments, re-creating the prince's living planet with space objects as well as a galaxy at Petite France, a French concept cultural villa; Gapyeong-gun; 8,000 won adults, 6,000 won ages 14-19; 5,000 won ages 3-13; plpcamp.com. For more about illuminations in South Korea: tinyurl.com/o489nmk.



Koji SASAHARA/AP

Visitors walk through lights at Tokyo Dome City in Tokyo on Dec. 6. The illuminations, which is lit with more than 2 million LEDs, commemorates the 26th anniversary of the founding Tokyo Dome. It's open through Feb. 16. For more illuminations: stripes.com/go/paclights.



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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific



Tokyo's Little Bavaria

Christmas Market in Roppongi Hills ablaze with kitsch

By JAMES KIMBER
Stars and Stripes

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Here in Tokyo, the Tokyoites do as the Germans do, at least for Christmas. For the eighth year, the Christmas Market in Oyane Plaza remains the heart of the Roppongi Hills Artelligent Christmas.

The six little shops that make up the covered outdoor market sell authentic German Christmas decorations. Shoppers can also stop by the food booths for sausages, soups, beer and other German favorites.

The over-the-top German inspiration makes visitors feel as if they've stepped onto the set of a Christmas movie. Reindeer parade over the market, ugly Christmas sweaters are fashioned by the merchants and words with umlauts and essets are loosely translated with Japanese kana. Add some tuba players in lederhosen for good measure, and the downtown area could have a potential PR crisis in political correctness.

The main street is covered end to end in Christmas lights, a Tim Burton-collaborated Christmas Tree is on display and the Mohri Garden and Roku Roku Plaza boast their own illuminations. To top it all off, the views can be enjoyed from Whisky Hills, which as the name implies, is the perfect spot to check out the area while sipping on some of the finest whiskeys in the world. Most of these activities are all open through Christmas Day.

kimber.james@stripes.com
Twitter: @james_kimber



PHOTOS BY JAMES KIMBER/Stars and Stripes

Roppongi Hills Christmas Market is open though Christmas Day in the upscale Tokyo shopping district. Even on rainy days, there are plenty of indoor shops and sights.



Roppongi Hills Christmas Market at Oyane Plaza sells authentic German sausages and beers. The shops offer about everything you'd expect from a Christmas market in Germany, with the occasional Japanese twist. You can even enjoy the sights from Whisky Hills while indulging in a stiff drink.



KNOW & GO

Directions: The market is at Oyane Plaza in Tokyo's Roppongi Hills. As parking is expensive and limited in this area, public transportation is encouraged. From Shinjuku Station, board either the Oedo Line for Roppongi/Daimon or the Nanboku Line for Hiyoshi and get off at Roppongi Station.

Roppongi Hills is about a 10-minute walk and has many English-speaking customer service representatives at the information kiosks.

Alternatively, free parking might be available at Hardy Barracks on a first-come, first-serve basis. Hardy Barracks is about a 20-minute walk from Roppongi Hills.

Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. through Dec. 25.

Cost: Walking and looking is free; food and drinks must be purchased. **Food and drink:** Eats include German sausage, schnitzel, soup, hot dogs, goulash, pretzels, German bread and Viennese cake. Drinks include beer and hot spiced wine.

What's for sale: What you'd expect at a real German market, including ornaments, Christmas pyramids, holiday apparel and pottery. **Website:** For information partly in English and a map of the market, see tinyurl.com/rhmarkt

— James Kimber

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific

Cafe with cattitude

Hello Kitty-themed eatery marks 40th anniversary of cute cartoon

By DENISSE RAUDA
Stars and Stripes

After a long afternoon of shopping in Shibuya, I took a wrong turn as I made my way back to the Japan Rail stop and happened upon a sweet surprise: The Hello Kitty Cafe.

In Japan, the land of cat cafes, bird cafes and monkey bars, there should be room for Hello Kitty, no?

Featuring a gift store and a special menu — all in celebration of the cartoon's 40th anniversary — this temporary pop-up in the Guest Cafe and Diner is a sampling of existing Hello Kitty Cafes in South Korea, Hong Kong and the soon-to-be-opened Orange County, Calif., store.

Getting there is a bit of a journey that involves dodging shoppers inside the Shibuya Parco department store building, then waiting among the crowds for an elevator to the 7th floor. Once there, the crowds thin and give way to a massive tableau of pink decor.

Cafe patrons line up, and a hostess delivers a menu and a set of rules: a one-hour table limit and no second orders. I waited about 15 minutes for a seat.

The attention to detail meant that everything, down to the place mats and coasters, were pink and Hello Kitty-themed. This darling little place was clearly put here to be photographed and oohed and aahed over. The hostess offered to use my cell phone to take my picture in front of a photo staging area.

The limited menu offers fried chicken, pot roast and veggies, and even a small Salisbury steak-looking patty in Hello Kitty's likeness, along with a few desserts and coffees. And for the adults, there's Hello Kitty wine.

I chose the Hello Kitty apple pie, which the menu tells me is a Hello Kitty favorite. At 1,580 yen, Hello Kitty's tastes are pricey, but my very photo-worthy dessert arrived quickly and did not disappoint. To look at this and not feel all mushy would be a disservice to the craftsmanship.

While the marriage of sweet, warm cinnamon apples and flaky, buttery pastry pieces might sound simple, the presentation really made the dessert. The pastry was in the shape of Hello Kitty's face, the features outlined in cocoa and topped with a bow of delicious raspberries, all served in a hot iron skillet. A mini apple and a souvenir mug with vanilla ice cream and caramel drizzle stood ready to make it pie a la mode. The flavor was just the right amount of sweet so as to not overwhelm, and it was by far the most *kawaii* pie I've ever had.

Incredible cuteness wasn't limited to my table. Everyone around me



All kinds of Hello Kitty desserts and drinks can be found at the Hello Kitty Cafe in Tokyo.

KNOW & GO

- The Hello Kitty Cafe runs through Dec. 25 inside The Guest Cafe and Diner at the Parco building in Shibuya.
- Location: Shibuya Parco building, 15-1 Udagawa-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-8377. 7th restaurant floor.
- Hours: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- Website: parco-art.com/web/access

— Denisse Rauda

was busy admiring their food. The woman sitting next to me was enjoying her cappuccino with Hello Kitty espresso foam art. The little girl across the dining room had an ice cream sundae fashioned to look like a Christmas tree using pastel green cotton candy and decorated with edible Hello Kitty ornaments.

After I devoured my pie, I headed to the gift shop featuring items exclusive to the cafe, including Hello Kitty Cafe souvenir tote bags and cups. For wine lovers, the shop also stocks red, white and sparkling varieties to take home.

I bought a three-pack of postcards with the cafe logo (about \$2.50) to send to my jealous friends back home.

Despite being a Hello Kitty fan since childhood, I admit that as a grown-up without children, I felt a little ridiculous sitting in the cafe until I realized that plenty of other adults were soaking up the Hello Kitty nostalgia, too. I loved the experience. It was very Japan and so fun.

The Hello Kitty Cafe with its over-the-top-ness ended up being the perfect outcome for taking a wrong turn in this big city.

Hello Kitty fans should note that this cafe is on limited engagement until Dec. 25.

rauda.denissee@stripes.com



PHOTOS BY DENISSE RAUDA/Stars and Stripes



Above: Like most of the dishes at the Hello Kitty Cafe, this apple pie was served in the cartoon character's likeness. At 1,580 yen, the pie is not cheap, but it's been a favorite with Hello Kitty patrons.

Left: Customers at the cafe can enjoy a glass of Hello Kitty champagne.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

NEW ALBUMS

David Guetta

Listen
(Atlantic/Parlophone)

David Guetta has proved again and again he's the master of the dance floor hook. The Frenchman's sixth album, "Listen," brings an army of reasons to support this without veering too much into club territory — from the myriad collaborators that elevate the dance tunes to a collection of well-crafted tracks to the mix and match of genres.

"Dangerous" starts off the record with an urgent piano that suggests the possibilities are endless, while "Lovers on the Sun," featuring Sam Martin, is an unlikely Western spaghetti dance tune that touches on post-modernist sensibilities. It's the album's standout track.

Sia, who worked with Guetta on the massive hit "Titanium," works a double shift on the new album. She contributes to "Bang My Head" and "The Whisperer" and presents two faces of the same coin: techno euphoria on the one hand and piano soulfulness on the other.

The album's chill-out factor comes from three Caribbean-flavored tracks: the catchy "Lift Me Up," the tongue-in-cheek yet affable "No Money No Love" and the dull if feasible "Sun Goes Down" with MAGIC! Nicki Minaj and Afrojack deliver a startling R&B bump and funk gem in "Hey Mama," and John Legend, another unusually gifted performer, offers another brilliant reason to love this album — his ballad "Listen" wrangles both the ears and the hips into action.

Guetta might be a club kid at heart, but his music has managed to grow up.

— Cristina Jaleuri/The Associated Press

One Direction

Four (Syc0/Columbia)

One Direction has done the almost impossible for a boy band: The English-Irish quintet has held the fickle attentions of teenage girls the world over for three years

— the equivalent of 30 in two years — and the band's new album, "Four," isn't likely to diminish the group's stronghold.

On "Four," One Direction — Niall Horan, Zayn Malik, Liam Payne, Harry Styles, Louis Tomlinson — continues to produce perfectly polished pop tunes with the edges buffed for maximum shine. And shine they do: it's hard to deny the anodyne appeal of strummer "Ready To Run," the up-tempo Buddy Holly-sway of "Girl Almighty," the Ed Sheeran-penned sweetly nostalgic "18," or new single, "Night Changes," which might or might not be about losing one's innocence. It's hard to tell since the band's lyrics wisely never veer from PG.

Produced primarily by Julian Bunetta and John Ryan, musically, "Four" often harks back to the '80s, a decade before any of the band members were born, with open, echo-y drums that wouldn't sound out of place on a Martika record. Acoustic guitars and synthesizers comfortably collide throughout.

One Direction's primary appeal is its members' vulnerability. When they aren't riding in on their white steeds to rescue the girl, they are willing victims of love, seemingly powerless over femme fatales on songs like peppy "No Control" and "Stockholm Syndrome." In a capricious world, they promise undying fealty and they will never knowingly hurt you, or if they do, they are relentlessly apologetic, such as on "Where Do Broken Hearts Go." They are as mythical and non-threatening as unicorns, and that's why teenage girls find them so fetching.

One Direction's last album, "Midnight Memories," was the world's best-selling album of 2013. "Four" will likely give Taylor Swift's "1989" a run for its money for the 2014 title.

— Melinda Newman/The Associated Press



Faithful to a fault

Too-reverent tribute only traces the surface

By RANDY LEWIS
Los Angeles Times

Either imitation really isn't the sincerest form of flattery, or flattery simply isn't all it's cracked up to be. Either way, the new two-CD tribute to the music of Paul McCartney, "The Art of McCartney," is a glaring example of a blown opportunity.

It must have looked great on paper: Producer Ralph Sall, a longtime fan of the ex-Beatle as well as a big admirer of the long-running touring band that backs McCartney on his concert tours, started with a great idea and then scored the participation of a wealth of rock and pop stars, each offering his or her take on a song from McCartney's estimable songbook.

That talent list is impressive: Bob Dylan, Brian Wilson, Willie Nelson, Allen Toussaint, Dr. John and, in a nod to musicians who got their start after 1970, the Airborne Toxic Event, Owl City and Perry Farrell, to name a smattering of the nearly three dozen participants.

They're backed by McCartney's band, which ostensibly adds another layer of authority. But there's the rub. As expertly as guitarists Brian Ray and Rusty Young, keyboardist Paul Wickens and drummer Abe Laboriel Jr. back the man himself, their note-perfect renditions of original Beatles, Wings and McCartney solo arrangements behind all the guests, with a couple of noteworthy exceptions, simply results in an extended session of Paul McCartney karaoke night.

What light can Billy Joel shed on "Maybe I'm Amazed" or "Live and Let Die" when the only difference between Joel and McCartney's performances is Joel's slightly gruffer voice? Even the guitar solo is identical to Paul's.

Where's the insight into "Junior's Farm" or "Hey Jude" as sung by Steve Miller (0 against carbon copy accompaniment from the original records? And was anybody anywhere waiting breathlessly to hear Sammy Hagar rock out on "Birthday"?

Even the ever idiosyncratic Night Tripper, New Orleans funkmeister Dr. John, seems straightjacketed in his game stab at "Let 'Em In." At least Allen Toussaint brings a shred of Crescent City flavor to his performance of the New Orleans-inspired "Lady

Madonna." B.B. King also unleashes a good measure of the blues spirit to a comparatively obscure choice, "On the Way" from 1980's "McCartney II" album.

To be sure, it's a twisted treat hearing 73-year-old Dylan growl his way through "Things We Said Today," making the minor-key reverie sound more ominous than ever, and Jamaica's Toots Hibbert, who's joined by stellar reggae rhythm section Sly & Robbie, immediately freshens up "Come and Get It" with a perky island groove.

The standout track of the whole project is easily Brian Wilson's treatment of another relatively low-profile track: "Wanderlust," from McCartney's 1982 album, "Tug of War." That may reflect the mutual-admiration these two separated-at-birth pop icons — born two days and an ocean apart in June 1942 — have held

Various Artists

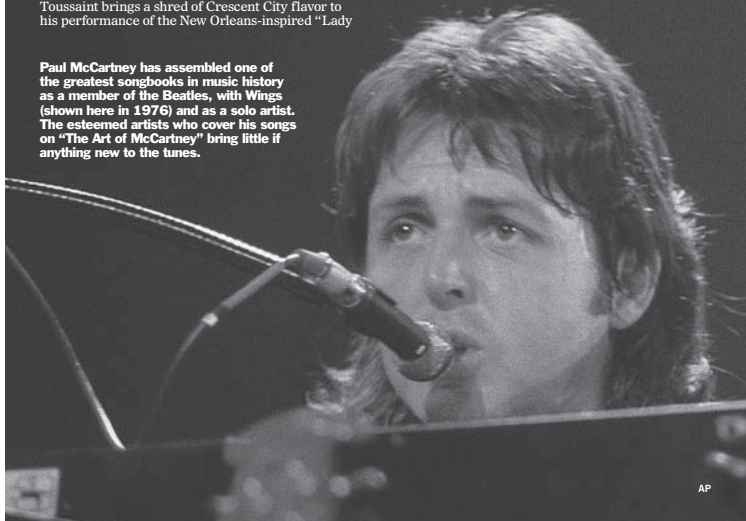
The Art of McCartney (Kobalt)

throughout most of their lives.

Even with his limited voice of today to work with, Wilson invests considerable melancholy and sweetness into his performance, and his rich harmonies, of course, are characteristically gorgeous. It helps that the song is nowhere near as intensely familiar as such cornerstone numbers as "Let It Be," "Band on the Run," "The Long and Winding Road," and the other McCartney biggies that make up the bulk of this collection.

If only the others brought aboard were extended as much freedom to do something other than trace outlines over the contours of this familiar canon.

Paul McCartney has assembled one of the greatest songbooks in music history as a member of the Beatles, with Wings (shown here in 1976) and as a solo artist. The esteemed artists who cover his songs on "The Art of McCartney" bring little if anything new to the tunes.



WEEKEND: MUSIC

No 'Sucker'

Rising British recording artist Charli XCX finding a spot in the 'pop circus'

By MIKAEL WOOD
Los Angeles Times

In her hit single "Break the Rules," Charli XCX makes one thing abundantly clear: "I don't wanna go to school!" she insists over a propulsive synth-pop groove.

Yet on a recent evening, school was precisely where the young British singer found herself. Charli XCX had been booked to play the homecoming dance at Aspire Pacific Academy in Huntington Park, Calif., part of a so-called "takeover" by a video-game company launching a new title with music by the singer. So there she was in the school gym, belting out her song "Boom Clap" to several hundred students dressed in suits and candy-colored dresses.

Standing in a fluorescent-lighted hallway before her three-song set, the 22-year-old said she'd agreed to the gig because she grew up loving teen movies such as 1999's "Jawbreaker," in which pop-punk band the Donnas perform at a school prom. "But when it comes to stuff like this, I'm really selective with what I do," she added. "You're not gonna see me dressed as a sandwich on the side of the road with a sign that says 'Buy my album.' That's not really my style."

So it isn't. On "Sucker," her new record set for release on Dec. 15, Charli XCX thrashes through 13 songs full of razor-sharp keyboard licks and appealing, sassy attitudes. "Everything was wrong with you, so breaking up was easy to do," she sneers in "Breaking Up"; later, in "Famous," she and some pals threaten to crash a party and "act so shameless, just like we're famous." With bracing, punk-inspired production by Patrik Berger, Justin Raisen and Vampire Weekend's Rostam Batmangli, among others, the record is irresistible, but not because she's aiming to please.

And yet, as her recent homecoming adventure indicates, the singer born Charlotte Aitchison knows this is the moment for a push. When her major-label debut, "True Romance," came out in early 2013, Charli XCX was a hipster favorite several years removed from her early experience making videos at art school and posting songs on Myspace.

Now, though, she's a recognizable presence who's had a hand in two of the biggest hits of the last 18 months: Icona Pop's "I Love It," which she co-wrote, and Iggy Azalea's "Fancy," for which she sang the hook. Over the summer, "Boom Clap" rose to No. 8 on Billboard's Hot 100 after it was featured in the blockbuster "The Fault in Our Stars."

"Her off-season between albums — I mean, you can't even call it that," said David Saslow, general manager of her label, Atlantic Records. "Those were such key strokes for her." As a result, Saslow added, the label is marketing "Sucker" much more intently than "True Romance," which sold a mere 18,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Charli XCX appeared alongside Taylor Swift and Ariana Grande Dec. 5 at Ingle Ball, the annual all-star holiday concert presented by L.A.'s influential Top 40 radio station KIIS-FM (102.7). And she's scheduled to appear Dec. 13 on "Saturday Night Live."

KIIS program director John Ivey said the serrated sound of "Sucker" fits in well alongside current hits by Lorde and the Swedish singer Tove Lo. (Raisen called the approach "I Love It" on Ramones steroids.") But Ivey added that Charli XCX's music also reflects a seriousness and a clarity of purpose that reminds him of a different kind of artist, one who likewise moved from writing songs for others to becoming a huge star on his own.

"She's got a little bit of that Bruno Mars thing," he said.

Charli XCX said that watching "I Love It" and "Fancy" explode — and then having record executives press her for more songs exactly like them — made her want to do two things at the same time on her new album.

"On one hand, it's clearly very pop," she said. "On the other, it's me critiquing this weird world that I've somehow ended up in. That's why I called the album 'Sucker.' I'm pointing a finger at all the boring people I've met in this industry who take themselves so seriously and think it's important to have meetings about clothes," she laughed.

"But of course I'm aware that I'm part of the pop circus."

And the circus seems in little danger of shutting down. As she prepared for a meet-and-greet with a group of students at Aspire Pacific Academy, the singer mentioned that she'd just bought her first apartment, located about an hour outside of London.

"It's actually the old ballroom of this mansion that's been split up," she said excitedly, adding that she planned to decorate it with a "super '70s porno vibe": shag carpeting, hanging chairs, the whole bit.

"It's gonna be sick," she said. "But so far I've been there three times."



Charli XCX

Sucker (Atlantic Records)

Charli XCX, the British artist with a penchant for teenage churlishness, knows a thing or two about warfare. With her second major label album, "Sucker," she throws a smoke grenade out

rock-pop digestibles and runs for cover while the listeners stumble around intoxicated and confused.

First single "Boom Clap" is an electrifying synth with a punchy hook. The dark sound of "Break the Rules" gives her an edge mitigated by the somewhat childish chant, "I don't wanna go to

school. I just wanna break the rules." The song, however, works as a potent instigator to party.

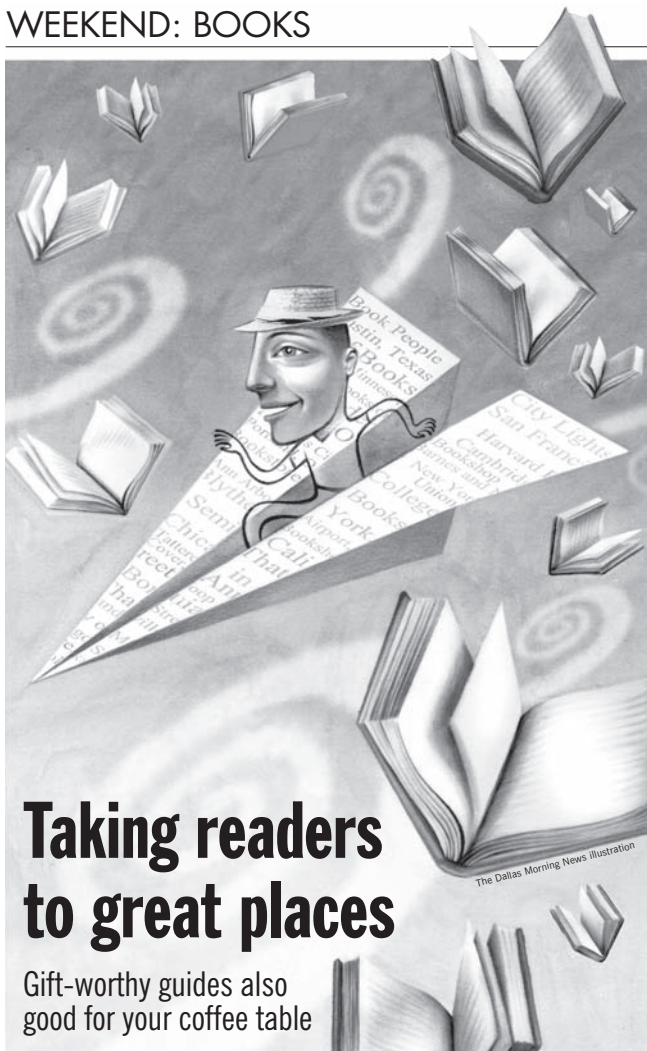
The title track is another cheeky rock invective thrown at all those boring adults who don't know how to have fun. The sound throughout "Sucker" borrows riffs heavily from mid-'90s alternative

rock bands like Elastica, especially on tracks like "Gold Coins," "Hanging Around" and "Breaking Up."

This is petulant rock at its best and teenage angst at its worst, with a good measure of talent.

— Cristina Jaleru
The Associated Press

WEEKEND: BOOKS



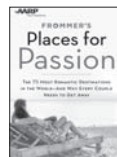
BY BETH J. HARPAZ
The Associated Press

Shopping, romance, bucket lists, inspiration and information: All of these things and more can be found in books for travelers that are out this season in time for the holidays. In addition to being gift-worthy, some of the titles make a nice addition to your own coffee-table collection; others are useful for trip planning or might serve as fodder for travel dreams.

"111 Shops in New York That You Must Not Miss: Unique Finds and Local Treasures," by Susan Lusk and Mark Gabor, is a fun guide to retailers around the city, from well-known emporiums like Eatly and ABC Carpet & Home, to unusual specialty shops selling books, vintage jewelry, skateboards, hats, lingerie and more.

"Places for Passion: The 75 Most Romantic Destinations in the World," by Pepper Schwartz and Janet Lever, offers inspiration for couples' getaways from sophisticated cities and exotic destinations to beaches, resorts and outdoor adventures around the world. Schwartz, a "love and relationship expert" for AARP, is also one of the experts on A&E Networks' FYI channel's reality series "Married at First Sight."

"World's Best Cities: Celebrating 220 Great Destinations" is a gorgeously illustrated hardcover book that offers an inviting glance at cities around the world from New York to Abu Dhabi, along with curated lists of best cities in categories like eco-smart, oceanfront, high-altitude and all-American. **"You Only Live Once: A Lifetime of Experiences for the Explorer in All of Us,"** also a lavishly illustrated hardcover, describes experiences rather than places, from tasting the



world's hottest chili peppers to the best birding, safaris, train rides and castles.

Other
books
available
this season
from Lonely

Planet: "Best in Travel 2015," with lists of top countries, cities, regions, freebies and more for the new year;



"The Best Place to Be Today," with a recommendation for every day of the year; and **"Best Ever Travel Tips,"** a small, cute flip book

advice on how to book trips, how to complain, how to stay healthy and even what to bring — like a \$20 Casio F91-W watch “straight out of 1981” that works “for ages” and will never be stolen.



the usual categories: **"Travel: The Guide"** by Doug Lansky. "This guide won't provide hotel sugges-



photos and clever graphics, the book offers interesting factoids on topics like travel safety (road accidents are the leading cause of tourist deaths worldwide); accounts of what it's like to travel in a wheelchair or if you're overweight; and photo comparisons of "English breakfasts" served by airlines worldwide.

Taking readers to great places

Gift-worthy guides also good for your coffee table

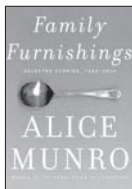
Munro's short stories capture the human experience

By ANN LEVIN
The Associated Press

A year after Alice Munro won the Nobel Prize for literature and was cited for her mastery of the modern short story, her publisher has collected 24 of her stories published over the past two decades.

"Family Furnishings" serves as a companion volume to an earlier compendium, "Selected Stories," and is as good a place as any to get acquainted with her distinctive voice: pitiless and tender, solemn and sly, elegant and clunky, and always terrifyingly intelligent.

The stories are mostly written in a straightforward key, yet some are strange and experimental — parts of “My Moth-



er's Dream," for instance, are narrated by an infant. They veer sharply backward and forward in time, the point of view shifting among a host of major and minor characters. Has any writer

Has any writer ever paid such loving attention to the tedious, repetitive historically, a feminine howling, almost nursing infants? And not be pigeonholed as domesticity.

Braided through her pointillistic accounts of family life, set largely in the farm towns of southwestern Ontario, are shocking episodes of adultery, incest, alcoholism and even murder, always recounted in her calm, matter-of-fact tone. Thus her work has been described as Canadian (a synonym for well-mannered?) gothic.

Since the 2012 publication of "Dear Life," which includes several semiautobiographical stories, and her winning the 2013 Nobel Prize at age 82, the facts of her life have become known. Born during the Depression to parents of modest means, she watched her mother struggle with early-onset Parkinson's disease and her father struggle to make a living, first as a fox farmer, then in a foundry.

British Columbia, she scribbled stories during her children's naps and between loads of laundry, raising three daughters (a fourth died) before the marriage fell apart. Next, a move back to Ontario and a happy second union with a former college acquaintance, a geographer whom she credited with helping her appreciate the flat terrain of her childhood.

Echoes of her life reverberate through the stories, and while the names and circumstances change, the themes remain constant: the value of hard work, the enduring influence of family, the corrosive effects of class, the explosive power of love, and the beauty and terror of nature. Not the least of her concerns, perhaps best expressed in the title story, is her ardent ambition to turn her life into art.

WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT

NEW ON DVD

“Guardians of the Galaxy”: Group of thieves comes together to save the universe. Chris Pratt stars. It’s “Star Wars” meets “Farscape,” a fun ride driven by top-notch performances, a galaxy of funny moments and a wicked soundtrack. It’s the latest film based on a Marvel Comics series. But even if you don’t know the difference between Iron Man and Iron Fists, the blend of action and humor provides plenty of entertainment. With a mix of the dry wit of Han Solo and the smugness of Tony Stark, Pratt gives the movie the kind of flawed hero on which many a film franchise has been built. He is as quick with a quip as he is with a weapon.



MARVEL STUDIOS/MCT

Zoe Saldana and Chris Pratt star in “Guardians of the Galaxy.” It’s now available on DVD.

Also available on DVD: “When the Game Stands Tall” “I, Origins”: Couple uses fate to test truth about God.

“Calvary”: Good priest feels sinister forces closing in after being threatened by a mysterious parishioner.

“The Mind of a Chef: Magnus Nilsson”: Combines travel, cooking, history and science.

“Family Guy: Season 14”: Includes episode where Stewie is reborn into a wealthy British household.

“The Only Folk Collection You’ll Ever Need”: Eclectic collection of traditional, classic folk music.

“Por Siempre Mi Amor”: Telenovela remake of “Mi Segunda Madre.”

“Search of Aliens: Season One”: Giorgio Tsoukalos travels the globe to research and investigate evidence of extraterrestrials.

“Barney Miller: Season 6”: Contains 22 episodes of the TV cop comedy.

“Hart to Hart: Season 3”: Robert Wagner and Stefanie Powers play the stylish detectives.

“Mister Ed: The Complete Series”: All six seasons of the talking horse series are available in one set.

“Frank”: Offbeat comedy about a musician who joins an avant-garde pop band.

“Mork & Mindy: The Complete Series”: This comedy about an alien visitor made Robin Williams a star.

“NOVA: Bigger Than T. Rex”: Scientists look into possibility that T. Rex wasn’t the largest dinosaur.

“RWBY: Volume 2”: Anime series about young people who must save the world.

“Finding Joy”: Self-absorbed writer rediscovers himself.

“Day of the Mummy”: Danny Glover stars in this adventure film set in Egypt.

“Secret Agent: The Complete Series”: Patrick McGeehan stars in this TV spy series.

“Get on Up”: Chadwick Boseman stars in this film about the life of James Brown.

“Doctor Who: The Complete Eighth Series”: Peter Capaldi takes over as the time traveler.

—Rick Bentley/The Fresno Bee

‘Girlfriends’ Guide’ is a first for network, creator & star

By LYNN ELBER
The Associated Press

“Girlfriends’ Guide to Divorce” is a sharply observed series about divorce, yes, but love and friendship and family as well. Its premiere episode is funny and moving, sexy and sad, and very adult. But it’s nuance rather than crassness that rules — although the characters’ glossy affluence has the potential to rankle.

“Girlfriends’ Guide,” airing Sundays on AFN-Family, can claim pioneer status as the first scripted series for Bravo, home of such flashily entertaining fare as the “Real Housewives” franchise, and the first series topped by Lisa Edelstein, who shines as woman-on-the-edge Abby McCarthy.

It also marks the auspicious bow of Marti Noxon as a solo series creator, following writing and producing stints on a range of hits including “Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” “Grey’s Anatomy” and another groundbreaking, “Mad Men.”

“We never wanted to go into scripted just to go into scripted,” said Lara Spotts, Bravo Media’s senior vice president in charge of development. Even as other reality-focused channels jumped on the scripted bandwagon, “we knew we had to wait for just the right project.” Noxon and her hour-long series — which at one point was in development for Showtime as a half-hour — turned out to be “the voice” that Bravo wanted, Spotts said.

“She’s talking about subjects that our

reality characters are going through. She’s talking about things that our viewers are going through, but in a way that feels really fresh and unique,” Spotts said.

Loosely inspired by Vicki Iovine’s series of nonfiction guides to pregnancy and motherhood, the 13-episode “Girlfriends’ Guide” stars Edelstein as a successful how-to author whose upbeat depiction of her family life belies a disintegrating marriage to filmmaker Jake (Paul Adelstein, “Private Practice”).

Edelstein, the former “House” star with an impressive track record of playing supremely confident women, here is vulnerable and sweetly affecting.

“I have never had an opportunity like this before in my life,” Edelstein said. “It says something about where the world is... to be able to tell a story about this lively, sexual human being who’s in her 40s, that alone is something that wouldn’t have happened when I started in this business.”

Abby’s circle includes pals and divorce war veterans Lyla (Janeane Garofalo) and Phoebe (Beau Garrett), and her brother Max (Patrick Huesinger). He’s a believer in marriage who achieved his dream of tying the same-sex knot with Ford (J. August Richards).

The characters are largely white, beautiful and, at the start, living the easy life in Los Angeles. Aside from Ford, who is African-American, and minorities included in later episodes, Noxon acknowledges it is a “WPP show,” shorthand for “white people problems.”

Does she worry about backlash?

“It’s a really difficult question and I saw Lena Dunham (the creator and star of ‘Girls’) struggle with it,” Noxon said. “The problem for me, and I think (Dunham) said something like this, is the best writing I can do is telling the things I know from my own experience.”

Noxon, a divorced mother of two, says she has drawn on her own history and that of friends and the show’s writers.

The characters aren’t always shown in a favorable light: Phoebe, for instance, is unabashed about exchanging sex for money with her ex.

“To a degree we make light of it and acknowledge that sometimes this privileged life is ridiculous and sometimes people take it for granted,” Noxon said. “But I kind of have to go back to the idea that what is universal is the emotion of it, and it doesn’t matter what color you are, or even what class.”

“I have never had an opportunity like this before in my life. It says something about where the world is. ... to be able to tell a story about this lively, sexual human being who’s in her 40s, that alone is something that wouldn’t have happened when I started in this business.”

— Lisa Edelstein, left, with Dylan Schombing on “Girlfriends’ Guide to Divorce.”



BRAVO/AP

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

YOGA

in school

Mindfulness course helps teens cope with stress

By GOSIA WOZNIAK
The Associated Press

As the morning school bell rings and students rush through crowded corridors, teenagers in one Portland, Ore., classroom settle onto mats and meditation pillows. They fall silent after the teacher taps a Tibetan "singing bowl."

"Allow yourself to settle into the experience of being here, in this moment," teacher Caverly Morgan tells two dozen students at Wilson High School.

The students are enrolled in a for-credit, yearlong mindfulness class meant to ease youth anxiety and depression and to prevent violence. For 90 minutes, three days a week, they practice a mix of yoga, sitting and walking meditation, visualization techniques, deep breathing, journaling and non-judgmental listening.

The idea behind mindfulness is that focusing on the present moment helps a person deal better with stress, difficult emotions and negative thoughts.

Mindfulness, yoga and meditation have gained popularity among Americans in recent decades, buoyed by studies showing their benefits to emotional, mental and physical health. The centuries-old practices have roots in Buddhism and Hinduism, but Western culture has secularized them to focus on physical postures, breathing and relaxation techniques.

Such practices are now offered by corporations like Google, Target and General Mills to their employees. Prison inmates, hospital patients and the U.S. Marines are using them to combat stress and illness, increase focus and well-being. And now schools all over the country are introducing the practices.

Some people have greeted the move with less than enthusiasm.

Last year, an elementary school in Ohio ended its mindfulness program after parents complained it was too closely linked to Eastern religion and a conservative Christian law firm unsuccessfully sued on behalf of a couple in Encinitas, Calif., arguing their school district's yoga classes indoctrinate children.

But many school districts are reporting success.

In Richmond, Calif., where a teacher started a mindfulness program called the Mindful Life Project, schools have reported drops in detentions and referrals among low-income, at-risk youth.

The school district in South Burlington, Vt., implemented a successful mindfulness course as part of a health and wellness program, and now administrators there have written a manual on incorporating mindfulness into K-12 curriculums.

Portland is known for its progressivism, so it should be no surprise the idea of teaching mindfulness is being embraced here. Students at Wilson say the class has been a boon for them.

"Sometimes I have trouble breathing; I have panic attacks. This class helps me bring more attention to my breath and overcome that," junior Cassia McIntyre said.

"Sometimes I have trouble breathing; I have panic attacks. This class helps me bring more attention to my breath and overcome that. I'm less stressed out and able to better cope with stress."

Cassia McIntyre
student, Wilson High School

"I'm less stressed out and able to better cope with stress."

The class is the brainchild of Morgan, who trained at a Zen Buddhist monastery for eight years and started a meditation center in Sacramento. After moving to Portland two years ago, Morgan teamed up with Allison Copcino, who teaches yoga to children.

The two started an after-school program at Wilson. After hundreds of students signed up, principal Brian Chatard took note. The school was dealing with a student's suicide, and few resources were available to address students' emotional and mental health.

Chatard said high school years are hard for many students, because they entail emotional and hormonal changes, social and academic pressures — and for some, depression.

"High school is the hardest period of time for kids," Chatard said. "You've got emotional changes, hormonal changes, all the social pressures. It's also the onset of

Below: Students meditate during a mindful studies class at Wilson High School in Portland, Ore. The brainchild of teacher Caverly Morgan, pictured at top left, and first for-credit, full-year mindfulness class offered at a public high school in the U.S., it incorporates yoga and meditation into school curriculums to bring socioemotional benefits to students.

PHOTOS BY GOSIA WOZNIAK/AP



mental illness for some kids, depression hits, and there's the pressure of college and sports. All these things kids do is overwhelming without having a strategy to deal with it."

During a class in October, after a half hour of yoga exercises, Morgan asked students to visualize a stressful moment in their lives and notice the negative internal dialogue in their heads.

Students wrote the negative self-talk in a journal, then shared it with the class and practiced

compassionate — non-judgmental — listening in pairs. Learning how to recognize the "inner critic" is crucial for teens, Morgan said.

"It's very important that teens learn how to do that, because that critical voice leads to behaviors that are extremely unhealthy, such as overeating, bullying, even committing suicide," Morgan said.

Pediatric psychologists at Oregon Health & Science University are partnering with the mindfulness program to study its impact on students.

A similar yearlong program is offered at Rosemary High School, an alternative school in nearby Gresham that serves students who were expelled or dropped out, are homeless or single parents.

Unlike at Wilson, mindfulness at Rosemary is mandatory for some 70 students, many of whom knew little or nothing about it. Some of the students were initially skeptical and complained about the course, the principal, Erica Stavis, said.

But on mid-term reviews, students reported the class had helped them better recognize their feelings, deal with anger and distance themselves from destructive thoughts during difficult family situations.

"This program filled a gap," Stavis said. "It helps students build capacity to problem solve."

WEEKEND: FAMILY



KIRILL KEDRINSKY, FOTOLIA/TNS

In addition to a handwritten letter in the mail, children can use a variety of websites to communicate with Santa.

St. Nick just a click away

Digital world offers conduits to Santa beyond traditional handwritten letters

By MICHAEL A. FUOCO
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Many kids know Santa Claus is coming to town soon, and there's no question they've all been nice, not naughty — or at least they tried — so there surely will be surprises and squeals on Christmas. But to give them an experience before the presents, parents have any number of ways to put their children in touch with Santa to just say "Hi" or to be reassured he's not having a senior moment and mistakenly thinking they want a Lego set when what they really, really, really want is "Minecraft."

Whether you're old-school or high-tech, Santa's within easy reach.

The U.S. Postal Service can help with its "Letters From Santa" program in which it mails from Anchorage, Alaska — but postmarks "North Pole" — self-addressed stamped envelopes containing letters written by parents in Santa's hand. Directions for participating in the program can be found online at bit.ly/LettersFromSanta.

The program has been around for a number of years — last year 170,000 envelopes were postmarked "North Pole" — but the postal service only this year began promoting it widely.

"We tried it on my niece's son. It really works," said Mark Saunders,

Directions for participating in the USPS "Letters From Santa" program can be found online at bit.ly/LettersFromSanta.

U.S. Postal Service spokesman.

"The combination of the postmark with how Santa responds with personalized information — that's what really blew my niece's son away."

He suggested parents photograph or videotape their child's surprise and joy and post it on social media. The irony was unintended — emails, Facebook and social media platforms have been increasingly and steadily replacing letters as the way the world's population communicates.

In fact, there are innumerable websites cobbled by capitalistic elves that will provide a way to communicate with Santa, some for free and some at a cost much higher than postage. Indeed, there are so many sites that Santa must be sitting at his computer monitor constantly, and he's quite digitally adept — he may have been around forever but that doesn't mean he's a Luddite.

There are websites where children — of course under a parent's supervision — can write Santa an email and even receive a reply, if requested.

"Too bad you have to work on Christmas Eve, but all the kids are

sure glad you do!" wrote one 8-year-old from Calgary, Alberta, Canada, on one site.

Some websites allow parents to personalize letters to be sent from "Santa" to their children. Others offer DVD greetings from Santa mailed to a child's home once the Jolly Old Elf receives personal information to include in the video. And there's even live video chatting with Santa.

Still, Saunders of the Postal Service feels there's nothing quite like a handwritten letter. "There's something unique about a letter. It's something that's physically created and can be treasured for generations."

Indeed, each year the postal service handles millions of letters written by children or their parents to Santa Claus, a tradition that began more than 100 years ago.

In fact, then-Postmaster General Frank Hitchcock started the postal service's "Operation Santa" program in 1912, authorizing local postmasters to let employees and citizens respond to the letters. Mail volume for Santa increased so much in the 1940s that the postal service invited charitable organizations and corporations to participate by providing written responses and small gifts.

That program operates in 20 American cities and includes participation by charitable organizations, major corporations, local businesses and postal employees who purchase, wrap and mail gifts to children who write to Santa. For safety reasons, participants do not know the child's name or address.

The program kicked off Dec. 2 in New York City, which has the largest participation in the country with more than 500,000 responses to letters each year.

SPOUSE CALLS

Book suggestions for holiday gifts

It's time for carols on the radio, cards in the mailbox and Christmas shopping. My idea of the best gift for almost anyone on my list is a book. Just ask my family.

Here's a roundup of some of the books that have crossed my desk in the past few months. One might just fit someone on your list or find a place on your own wish list.

"My Special Force," by Heather Means: This is the true story of Heather Means, who lost her Army husband, Ryan, not to combat but to cancer. Heather wrote this book using Ryan's letters, emails and journals, as well as her own to convey the spirit of the dynamic, funny and adventurous man she lost. The story is flat-out honest at every turn, and Heather refuses to draw any comforting conclusions about losing the person she loved most. In the end, however, the reader will still be inspired by Heather's decision to live when she felt like dying too, knowing that a full life is what Ryan wanted for her and their two daughters. This book lives up to its subtitle: "The Warrior Who Taught Me the Meaning of Life and Love."

"Right Side Up: Finding Your Way When Military Life Turns You Upside Down," by Judy Davis: Maintaining a steady course amid the twists and turns of military life is not easy. In this guide, Judy Davis draws on her own experiences as an Army wife, mom and businesswoman to present strategies for coping with the challenges of military life and building a solid emotional foundation. Easy to read and practical to use, this book includes exercises and directed journaling for personal application of the principles. "The book isn't meant to be one size fits all; it's what size fits you," says Judy. "Discovering what that is for you is part of the process." A good gift for someone who wants to start the new year with a new perspective.

"Your Gift to Me," by Bonnie Bartel Latino and Bob Vale: This one is fiction, just right for the romance-lover with military ties. It's a sweet story about Emily Meade, a journalist whose military aviator husband was killed in combat. Years later, when Emily meets Air Force pilot Ted Foley, she's drawn to him, but doesn't want to risk another painful loss. A series of suspicious military air mishaps sparks Emily's investigative instincts, and solving the mystery could bring the pair together. The authors create sympathetic and attractive characters, and I admit I especially liked that the protagonist was once a columnist for Stars and Stripes.

"Move and Other Four-Letter Words," by Joan Brown. So you think you've heard it all when it comes to moving stories? Not unless you've read this book by Air Force wife Joan Brown. Subtitled "Memoir of a Mobile Marriage," this book is the author's look back at her family's military adventures from the 1950s to the 1980s. It was a different time, both in national attitudes toward military service and the level of conveniences and benefits available to military families. From overseas moves with the family to her husband's service in Vietnam, the author uses a light touch and a sense of humor to paint a picture of military life in an earlier era. She offers no complaints, but pride in her husband's service, as well as her family's. Military spouses of any age will enjoy these stories and feel a kinship with Joan and her family.

"Iraq Dreams," by Gerald Alessio: This story about an Army reservist who returns injured in mind and body from Iraq is fictional, but depicts some of the real struggles of returning veterans. Rick Garcia loses his leg to battle and feels like he's losing his life to post-traumatic stress. On top of that, a divorce might cost him his family. The author, a retired psychologist, drew on his experience to write this book, saying, "There were some individuals I had the privilege of working with whose stories have stuck with me. I was often impressed with ... the courage they showed in fighting through their difficulties." Could be a good choice for those who've had similar struggles, and anyone wanting a better understanding of them.

Terri Barnes is the author of "Spouse Calls: Messages From a Military Life." Contact her at spousecalls@aol.com or at stars.com/go/spousecalls.



Terri Barnes

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

HOLDUP MAN

BY JEFF CHEN/EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

ACROSS

1 Mariner's array

5 Bubs

9 "Take _____" (exec's request)

14 Get cracking on smoothies

19 Devilfish

22 Like some college halls

23 "One who's not leading

25 Broad valleys

26 Group of jerks

27 Excoriates

28 Goes like hotcakes

29 "I have some bad news ..."

33 Fish on many a sashimi platter

35 Bryn _____

39 Yankees teammate of Captain Clutch

40 Compos mentis

41 Relieved (of)

42 Bread at a restaurant, typically

44 ID provider

47 Conk out

49 Unrefined material

50 Muttered commentary

51 Get a cut of

55 Transplants

57 Jubilation

58 Middle line of many an address: Abbr.

59 Google statistic

60 Part of OTOH

62 Java holder

63 Two will get you turned around

65 Cereal box abbr.

68 Paws

69 Very durable

71 Bartolomeo of Fox Business

72 Charmin competitor

73 City in which "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" is set

74 Bald-spot coverer

75 Have a loan from

76 Charges

78 Content that's hard for a search engine to access

80 All-

81 Standard of measurement

83 F.D.R. purchased the first one of these bonds

84 Sci-fi shooter

87 Result of a firing

88 Not pay attention at all

90 Was idle

91 Paid at the end, say

92 Big pitcher

93 U.S. city that becomes another U.S. city if you move the last letter to the front

96 An eternity

98 Mother of Eos and Helios

99 Animal's mouth

100 "What a message may relieve

105 Ones with muses

107 Breathe?

108 Big Three conference site

113 Create, as a canyon

114 "Not shirk a difficult task

117 Warren who wrote "The War of the Roses"

118 One with dreads

119 Engineers' competition set in a ring

120 Director Almodóvar

121 Arches in Gothic architecture

122 Be a busy beaver?

123 Written paeans

16 "Comfort provider during difficult times

17 Concert souvenir

18 Has way too much, briefly

20 Flame out

24 Jocund

28 Christmas gift holder

30 Rear

31 Is for two?

32 Armageddon

34 Day to beware

35 Juilliard deg.

36 MGM motto opener

37 "Crushing burden

38 Having special significance

43 Something handled in a bar

44 Dollop

45 "Arnold Schwarzenegger, once

46 Perturbed

48 She played Joanie in "Joanie Loves Chachi"

51 Goes viral, say

52 Puff the Magic Dragon's land

53 Imbues, as with flavor

54 Option in "Hamlet"

56 Corroded

60 Mantra sounds

61 Idiosyncrasy

62 Sounds edited out of some audio

64 Barrett of Pink Floyd

66 Native _____

67 Chinese "way"

70 Zigs or zags

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19				20				21					22				
23							24						25				
26							27					28					
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35	36	37	38	39					40						41		
42				43				44	45	46		47		48		49	
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			57				58						59				
60	61				62			63				64		65		66	67
68					69			70						71			
72						73				74				75			
		76			77			78			79		80				
81	82							83					84			85	86
87				88		89		90				91					
92					93		94	95		96	97					98	
99				100					101	102	103				104		
	105		106					107							108	109	110
111						114							115	116			
117						118					119						
120						121					122				123		

- 77 April foolers, e.g.

79 Like some bars and blankets

80 "The Godfather" enforcer who "sleeps with the fishes"

81 The "m" of "yes-m"

82 Deed of derring-do

85 Mideast inits.

86 Org. with the Larry O'Brien Trophy
- 89 Vim

91 It contains uracil

94 "The Little Mermaid" villainess, for one

95 Melodious

96 "La Dolce Vita"

97 Coordinated gene cluster

100 Gestating, after "in"
- 101 Nasty sort

102 Mythological figure hinted at by the answers to the eight starred clues as well as this puzzle's design

103 Something to chew on

104 Da's opposite

106 Eternally
- 109 "Not to mention ..."

110 Forte

111 Break

112 Kerfuffles

113 Ceiling

114 Sign of success?

115 Scheduling placeholder

116 "And _____"

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and visit gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE

S	E	C	O	M	A	N	O	S	E	E	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
O	N	S	I	L	O	B	E	S	V	E	S	O	S	E	O	O	O	O
O	V	E	I	L	E	B	O	T	O	N	O	H	S	E	A	V	O	O
V	I	L	L	A	S	E	O	N	I	L	I	E	S	E	O	O	O	O
V	E	H	I	L	S	N	O	B	E	S	V	E	S	O	S	E	O	O
E	V	I	L	E	B	O	T	O	N	O	H	S	E	A	V	O	O	O
N	O	N	A	V	E	S	E	I	L	E	S	E	O	I	L	E	S	E
N	V	E	S	E	O	I	L	E	S	E	O	I	L	E	S	E	O	O
O	L	E	M	O	S	E	O	I	L	E	S	E	O	I	L	E	S	E
V	I	L	E	B	O	T	O	N	O	H	S	E	A	V	O	O	O	O
L	M	E	N	S	E	L	E	T	E	R	N	O	S	E	H	I	O	O
S	L	I	H	O	N	X	O	B	O	D	E	E	T	E	R	O	O	O
S	L	I	V	E	R	O	N	I	E	V	H	S	E	S	O	I	S	E
E	R	O	O	E	I	O	A	N	G	O	E	I	E	E	E	E	E	E
O	I	L	E	N	V	S	O	O	R	E	O	R	E	O	R	E	O	O
I	V	E	L	E	S	O	N	O	I	L	E	S	E	O	I	L	E	S
S	L	I	E	S	E	H	I	L	O	S	E	O	I	L	E	S	E	O
S	E	T	O	E	R	O	L	O	S	E	N	I	L	O	S	E	O	O
G	E	I	A	L	E	N	V	E	S	E	O	I	L	E	S	E	O	O
O	I	D	O	H	O	M	E	N	V	S	O	A	V	E	O	S	E	O

BRAD TAYLOR

NO FORTUNATE SON

Veteran operator Pike Logan and partner Jennifer Cahill learn that their latest actions have gotten them fired, despite having saved thousands of innocent lives. But their shock and fury are cut short when a terrorist organization starts targeting military relatives — and taking them hostage.

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FACES

'Birdman' soars with Golden Globes with 7 nominations

By JAKE COYLE
The Associated Press

"Birdman" squawked loudest in the Golden Globes nominations, flying away with a leading seven nods including best picture in the comedy or musical category.

In nominations for the 72 annual Golden Globes announced Thursday morning by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, "Boyhood" and "The Imitation Game" trailed with five nods apiece. Those two films led a best drama category that also included "Foxcatcher," "Selma" and "The Theory of Everything."

In the best picture, comedy or musical category, "Birdman" was joined by "St. Vincent," "Grand Budapest Hotel," "Into the Woods" and — in a surprise — the independent British film "Pride."

Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's "Birdman, or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)," in which Michael Keaton plays a Hollywood star trying to mount a serious drama on Broadway, earned nods for Keaton and supporting players Edward Norton and Emma Stone, as well as for its direction, screenplay and score.

Richard Linklater's long-in-the-making coming-of-age drama "Boyhood," thus far the critical darling and the perceived front-runner of Hollywood's awards season, added nominations for Linklater's direction and script, and supporting actors Ethan Hawke and Patricia Arquette.

The World War II code breaker drama "The Imitation Game," starring Benedict Cumberbatch as mathematician Alan Turing, also went over well with the HFPA. In addition to its best picture nod, the Weinstein Co. release won nods for Cumberbatch as best actor, Keira Knightley for best supporting actress, Graham Moore for best screenplay and Alexandre Desplat for best score.

The other nominees for best actor in a drama were Steve Carell ("Foxcatcher"), David Oyelowo ("Selma") and Jake Gyllenhaal ("Nightcrawler") and Eddie Redmayne ("The Theory of Everything").

Most of the awards-season favorites were rewarded with decent showings Thursday, though some hopefuls failed to break through. Most notably, Angelina Jolie's World War II drama "Unbroken" yielded no nominations at all, though Jolie has seven times previously been nominated (winning thrice), including a nod for best foreign language film for her previous directing effort, "In the Land of Blood and Honey." Clint Eastwood's "Amer-

ican Sniper," starring Bradley Cooper as Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, also went unnoticed. Christopher Nolan's sci-fi epic "Interstellar" landed only a nomination for one of its Zimmer's score.

In the best actress category, 11-year-old Quvenzhané Wallis ("Annie") joined a battery of veteran performers in Julianne Moore ("Maps to the Stars"), Helen Mirren ("The Hundred-Foot Journey"), Amy Adams ("Big Eyes") and Emily Blunt ("Into the Woods").

On the dramatic side, the best actress category was notable for two stars in notably less adorned performances: Reese Witherspoon in the hiking drama "Wild" and Jennifer Aniston for "Cake." Also nominated were Moore (her second, for "Still Alice"), Felicity Jones ("The Theory of Everything") and Rosamund Pike ("Gone Girl").

One of the surprise winners of the day was "Grand Budapest Hotel." Along with a best picture nod in comedy, it earned nominations for Ralph Fiennes as best actor, and Wes Anderson for screenplay and director.

Fiennes and Keaton were joined in best actor, comedy or musical, by Bill Murray ("St. Vincent") and in a few less expected choices, Joaquin Phoenix for "Inherent Vice" and Christoph Waltz for "Big Eyes."

The Globes are known for sometimes idiosyncratic choices that help populate its red carpet with celebrities, but there weren't many odd picks. The Globes wrapped up the attendance of one star — George Clooney — ahead of Thursday's nominations by selecting the actor-director for its honorary Cecil B. DeMille Award.

Meryl Streep added her 26th nomination — eight wins — with a best supporting actress nod for the Stephen Sondheim musical "Into the Woods." She joins Stone, Arquette, Knightley and Jessica Chastain for "A Most Violent Year."

Among the TV categories, "Fargo" led with five nominations, including best TV miniseries or movie. HBO dominated with 15 nominations, while Netflix (seven nods) and Amazon (two) also made inroads. The best drama series nominations went to "The Affair," "Downton Abbey," "Game of Thrones," "The Good Wife" and "House of Cards." The nominees for best TV comedy series are: "Girls," "Jane the Virgin," "Orange Is the New Black," "Silicon Valley" and "Transparent."

For the third time in a row, the Globes telecast will be hosted by Tina Fey and Amy Poehler. The show will air Jan. 11.



CBS sets date for Letterman's last show

More than 32 years of late-night talk will pass into history next May 20, with CBS' announcement Wednesday that David Letterman will host his final "Late Show" on that day.

If Letterman makes all of his scheduled broadcasts until then, CBS said he will have hosted 6,028 versions of the "Late Show" and its NBC predecessor, "Late Night." Letterman moved to CBS in 1993.

"David Letterman has given to all of us a remarkable legacy of achievement and creative brilliance that will never be forgotten," said Leslie Moonves, CBS Corp. president and CEO. "It's going to be tough to say goodbye, but I know we will all cherish the shows leading up to Dave's final broadcast in May."

Letterman, 67, announced his impending retirement last April. CBS later named Stephen Colbert as Letterman's replacement.

CBS has not announced when Colbert will take over the "Late Show."

Letterman debuted on "Late Night" on NBC on Feb. 1, 1982. He jumped to CBS when NBC named Jay Leno instead of him as Johnny Carson's successor on the "Tonight" show.

Woman files defamation lawsuit against Bill Cosby

A woman who has accused Bill Cosby of sexually assaulting her in the 1970s filed a defamation lawsuit Wednesday against the comedian, alleging he "publicly branded" her a liar through statements made by his lawyer and publicist.

Tamara Green said in the lawsuit filed in federal court in Springfield, Mass., that Cosby drugged and assaulted her when she was an aspiring model. Green first spoke publicly about the alleged attack in 2005.

Green says after she did media interviews, Cosby's lawyer and publicist made statements intended to expose her to public contempt and ridicule. The attorney, Walter M. Phillips Jr., declined to comment. Messages left for the publicist, David Brokaw, weren't immediately returned. Cosby is the lawsuit's only defendant.

Cosby, 77, has never been charged in connection with any sexual assault allegations. In 2005, Cosby settled a civil case filed by Andrea Constand, a former employee at Temple University in Philadelphia. Green was one of a dozen women who were prepared to testify in Constand's lawsuit that Cosby sexually assaulted them.

Through his representatives, Cosby has denied renewed allegations by women alleging decades-old sexual assaults.

Los Angeles attorney Martin Singer, who has represented Cosby in the renewed round of allegations, did not immediately return calls seeking comment on Green's lawsuit.

Monaco's Princess Charlene gives birth to twins

For the first time since Monaco was founded in the 13th century, its royal family gave birth to twins on Wednesday, and dozens of cannons were fired to celebrate.

Monaco's Princess Charlene had a girl first and a boy second, but the boy will be the principality's future ruler, reflecting the male priority of Monaco's laws of succession. The royal twins Gabriella Therese Marie and Jacques Honore Rainier — born to Charlene, 36, and Prince Albert II, 56 — are heirs to the centuries-old Grimaldi dynasty that rules the wealthy principality.

Gabriella was born at 5:04 p.m. and her brother Jacques two minutes later, according to a palace statement.



"I have no words," said nominee Emma Stone, noting that she was honored to be a part of "the beautiful madness that is 'Birdman.'" "Now can someone please explain who this 'Meryl Streep' woman is?!"



"I've been a bit frantic," said nominee Eddie Redmayne on the phone from London. "I'm trying to finish all my Christmas shopping in a day, and now I got this phone call. I'm about to have a few mulled wines to celebrate."

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From The Associated Press

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OPINION
Obama's envoy picks: bold, not beautiful

By JAMES GIBNEY
 Bloomberg News

The confirmation last week of two spectacularly unqualified political nominees to head U.S. embassies in two budding autocracies, Hungary and Azerbaijan, prompted some predictable tut-tutting.

Sadly, President Barack Obama's approach to State Department appointments has deeper problems than garden-variety patronage. Political hirings have been insinuated much lower into the department's bureaucracy. And after bumping through ethics rules, the administration has carved out loopholes for hiring former lobbyists and "special government employees" who can earn outside income while in their official posts. Never mind the impact this breach of boundaries has on Foreign Service officers' dreams of future policy greatness. It's a recipe for flawed, and potentially corrupt, policymaking.

Of course, even the uber-diplomatic George H.W. Bush had his undiplomatic appointments. My favorite: Peter Secchia, a Michigan building magnate who, before arriving to take up his post in Rome, said: "I saw the new Italian Navy. Its boats have glass bottoms so they can see the old Italian Navy."

The Obama administration, however, has taken the practice of bringing in the underqualified to new extremes, and not just because it's willing to send a soap opera producer, Colleen Bell, producer of the "Bold and the Beautiful" up against a Putin Mini-Me (Hungary's Viktor Orban). Since 2009, 35 percent of ambassadors have been political appointees, more than in the administrations of either George W. Bush (30 percent) or Bill Clinton (28 percent).

Political appointees have filled an efflo-

rescence of "special envoy" slots — more than 40 at last count, many of them created under Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Remember Ronan Farrow's great achievements as "Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for Global Youth Issues"? Didn't think so. There are also special envoys to Muslim communities, civil society, faith-based and community initiatives, global intergovernmental affairs, international information programs — each one a political appointee supplemented by sundry strap-hangers. Within established bureaus, according to the American Foreign Service Association, this administration has also made mid-level management appointments than its predecessors. So-called "schedule B" employees — brought in from outside the Civil Service or the Foreign Service — more than tripled between 2008 and 2012.

Smart outsiders can bring valuable experience to an institution that John F. Kennedy once derided as "a bowl full of jelly" with "all those people who are constantly smiling." (Full disclosure: I smiled from 1989 to 1997.) Moreover, as the government studies guru James Q. Wilson observed, presidents like to sprinkle their own people throughout the government because they "see much of the bureaucracy as their natural enemy and are always searching for ways to bring it to heel."

But even assuming smart appointees, going too deep with them can backfire. According to the National Academy of Public Administration, the average appointee stays for only 2.5 years. All that churn can weaken institutional memory and operational skill. Special envoys short-circuit the policy process and sideline expertise.

But even to create a new Arctic Council special envoy whom you already have a whole Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs?

Mandela ended apartheid, but not inequality

By BERNADETTE ATUAHENE

Nelson Mandela's selfless brand of leadership surprised the world and won him universal accolades during his lifetime. After being confined to Robben Island for most of his 27 years in prison, Mandela became South Africa's first black president, and his goal was always reconciliation rather than revenge. But now that we have had a year to mourn him, it's important to also begin to critically evaluate his legacy, including his role in cementing the land-based inequalities created under colonialism and apartheid.

Starting in the 18th century, colonial and apartheid governments systematically stole property from black South Africans and gave it to whites at nominal cost. As a result, when Mandela took office in 1994, whites owned about 87 percent of the land, although they constituted less than 10 percent of the population.

In a political bargain with the outgoing apartheid regime, Mandela and his party, the African National Congress, allowed whites to keep their property. This meant that even if, for instance, the apartheid government had forcibly removed a village of black people in order to sell their land to a white farmer at far less than its value, the farmer would retain clear title to that land post-apartheid. If the new government later decided to take the land and return it to its former owners, then the state would have to pay the white farmer just compensation.

In exchange for this sizable concession, blacks were promised land reform, which is outlined in South Africa's post-

apartheid Constitution. Millions of blacks who were robbed of ownership or tenancy rights after 1913 could file claims for compensation; those who never owned land could gain land through the redistribution program; and through tenure upgrading, blacks who were allowed to be tenants only under white rule became owners. The ANC's land reform goal was to redistribute 30 percent of the land in the first five years of the new democracy.

But if the promises sounded equitable in theory, in practice they have been far from fair. Only one side of the bargain has been upheld: South African whites kept their property, but blacks still have not received their respective market-value compensation. In South Africa, and only 10 percent of the land has changed hands from whites back to blacks. Political apartheid may have ended, but economic apartheid lives on.

For a recent book, I interviewed 150 South African reform who had been seized during colonialism and apartheid and who received either money or land through the land restitution program. Their stories illuminate the ongoing injustice.

When the post-apartheid state expropriates land for redistributive purposes from current owners (who are mostly white), they receive market-value compensation. But when former owners whose land was grabbed under apartheid file successful claims for that land, most are granted modest symbolic awards called "Standard Settlement Offers." These offers have ranged from about \$2,000 to about \$6,000, a mere fraction of the land's value today.

Equity demands that black and white owners should either both receive symbol-

more mid-level apparatchiks also means more yes men and fewer experienced balloons to question big ideas. And, confronted by an artificial career ceiling, the best Foreign Service officers can be forgiven for thinking they have a brighter future elsewhere. Almost half of the respondents in one forthcoming poll of FSOs said such constraints were prompting them to consider ditching the service.

If that weren't bad enough, the Obama's administration's willingness to bend hiring rules should give pause to even its defenders. Exhibit A is the case of Robin Raphael, an ex-diplomat-turned-lobbyist for Pakistan who was rehired at the State Department as a senior adviser on Pakistan policy. She's now under federal investigation as part of a counterintelligence probe. One mystery is how she could have been hired in the first place. Her previous work for Pakistan put her outside the spirit, if not the letter, of the administration's stringent no-lobbyist rules.

The land-based list of exceptions to those rules is long and growing. The State Department, for instance, just named Amos Hochstein, a former lobbyist for Marathon Oil (and, indirectly, Libya and Moammar Gadhafi) as its "special envoy ambassador" for international energy affairs. "Come to think of it, one of his predecessors also lobbied for Libya. So much for the bold words of presidential candidate Barack Obama in 2007: 'I am in this race to tell the corporate lobbyists that their days of setting the agenda in Washington are over.' Seven years later, his diplomatic appointments suggest he's singing a different tune.

James Gibney writes editorials on international affairs. He was previously features editor at the Atlantic, deputy editor at the New York Times op-ed page and executive editor at Foreign Policy magazine.

ic compensation or both receive market-related compensation. Whites should not continue to get higher rates of compensation than blacks.

Some argue that these inequalities exist because the ANC is corrupt. Although corruption is undoubtedly a problem, the bigger problem in this case is the injustice of the initial political bargain. White South Africans were promised compensation for new policies with assurances that they had the right to keep their land or receive just compensation. Blacks, on the other hand, had to wait for institutions to be created and claims to be evaluated. And the programs established to benefit them were underfunded, because they had to compete with other urgent funding priorities such as the AIDS pandemic, a broken education system and spiraling crime rates.

Land reform is failing and land inequalities persist, in large part because of structural flaws in the political bargain that Mandela struck. The upside of the bargain was that it ensured South Africa transitioned from apartheid to democracy without massive bloodshed or economic disintegration. Mandela may well have chosen the best option available to him. But was the system fair? Hardly.

As we pay homage to Mandela on the first anniversary of his death, he should not be deified. He was a man forced to make hard choices, and he left a legacy of both reconciliation and inequality.

Bernadette Atuahene is a professor of law at the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago-Kent, and the author of "We Want Land: The Struggle from South Africa's Land Restitution Program." This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Putin's position poses threat Tampa (Fla.) Tribune

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who loves to strut on the world stage, appears intent on regaining his nation's lost stature. But the reality is that Russia is a nation in decline.

Global oil prices have tumbled to a five-year low, and Russia's ruble has fallen 40 percent against the dollar so far this year. Economists predict that inflation may soon reach 9 percent and continue climbing.

Even more serious for Putin, although likely to draw less attention from the Russian people, is another prediction by economists: Capital flight is expected to reach \$128 billion.

In other words, Russia has serious financial problems that Putin had not anticipated. It is something for which he is to blame, however.

"It is a completely new reality for him," said Sergei Guriev, an economist who does exotic last year.

"Whenever Russia wanted the oil price to go up, it has gone up," Guriev said. "He has always been lucky, and this time he is not lucky."

In the U.S. we have long worried about Russia's dependence on foreign oil. In Russia, there's an even more striking dependency on domestic oil production, which provides 60 percent of the nation's exports.

Though Americans may rejoice in the recent drop in prices at the gasoline pump, the falling prices represent a clear threat to Russia's economy and, if less directly, to Putin's stewardship. ... The West's big fear? That Putin may see war as a way out of his troubles. Then our present domestic worries would seem insignificant.

How torture report is patriotic The Seattle Times

Torture is abhorrent to the American sensibility — especially when the perpetrator is America.

But if this is the nation it purports to be, America must press up to the revolting conclusions of the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee's torture report presented Tuesday.

In its 500 page-inducing pages, the executive summary of the report details the CIA's campaign of secret and illegal "enhanced interrogation techniques" used on suspects detained following the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon.

Among other things, detainees were subjected with the reports' conclusion that the CIA misled Congress and the White House about its program, and that none of the barbarism led to information that kept Americans safe.

The cringe-worthy sadism done in the name of national security ranks among America's most sickening and shameful actions. At the same time, President Barack Obama has yet to fulfill his 2008 campaign promise to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility where some torture took place.

But the nation's saving grace comes in its historic insistence on admitting to its mistakes.



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

People hold anti-immigration reform signs as President Barack Obama arrives in Nashville, Tenn., on Tuesday to speak about his recent executive actions on immigration.

"One of the things that sets us apart from other countries is that when we make mistakes, we admit them," Obama told TV network Telemundo on Tuesday.

The nation admitted to 144 years of gender-based voter discrimination when it ratified women's suffrage in 1920. It took 134 years after abolition for an apology for slavery in 1997. And it took two years for the U.S. government to acknowledge in the midst of the Vietnam War that U.S. soldiers slaughtered hundreds of unarmed civilians in the My Lai massacre in 1968.

Only when the country acknowledges such mistakes and holds itself to the moral standards it preaches globally can it truly claim to be the great nation politicians casually profess it to be.

No encore of Nashville snub Paris (Tenn.) Post-Intelligencer

The sad thing about President Barack Obama's visit Tuesday to Nashville was the complete politicization of the occasion.

The president of the nation comes to town for a speech, and the governor doesn't even show up. Neither do our U.S. senators.

Why this snub? The governor and our two senators are Republicans, and party loyalty is more important than official niceties these days.

Once upon a time, any official of any importance would consider it mandatory to welcome the president to town. Political differences were put off for the time being. No longer.

The only dignitaries present on Tuesday were Democrats. The occasion turned into a partisan rally. About the only Republicans who turned out were protesters bearing anti-Obama signs.

A show of official courtesy used to be automatic on such occasions. If the president happened to make any critical remarks, the response was to grin and bear it. After all, he's the elected leader of the nation. Politics were to be played out in Congress.

Now it's politics from day one, politics now and forever. Our nation is the worse for it.

Suits won't stop file sharing Los Angeles Times

The entertainment industry spent years suing Internet users, file-sharing companies and websites over illegal music and movie downloading while the companies that make high-speed downloads possible — broadband providers such as Time Warner Cable and AT&T — watched from the sidelines. That changed last week, when music publishers BMG Rights Management and Round Hill Music sued one of the country's larger Internet service providers, cable TV operator Cox Communications, for not cutting off customers accused repeatedly of illegal file sharing. The publishers are right to expect Cox to help fight piracy, but the courts should resist their

attempt to turn ISPs into bare-knuckled enforcers.

The publishers' lawsuit is based on the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which absolves ISPs from liability for their users' copyright violations if they meet certain conditions. According to the publishers' complaint, Cox failed to comply with the law's requirement to implement a copyright cutting off repeat infringers' accounts. The publishers say their anti-piracy contractor, Rightscorp, notified Cox of millions of infringements on roughly 200,000 Cox accounts, yet the accounts have remained open "without consequence."

Rightscorp monitors file-sharing networks, then threatens legal action against those whose broadband accounts were allegedly used for piracy unless they pay a small fine. In other words, it seeks a cheaper, easier way to enforce copyrights than rights holders can obtain through the courts and their pesky due-process rules. Its approach is a bad idea, if ISPs don't identify the account holders, and they're under no legal obligation to do so unless the copyright owner has filed suit.

The larger question raised by the publishers' lawsuit is: At what point do ISPs have to disconnect subscribers whose accounts are used repeatedly to violate copyrights? Yet BMG, Round Hill Music and Cox don't need to answer that to make headway against piracy. The Copyright Alert System jointly developed by the major movie studios, record labels and largest ISPs doesn't threaten to cut off anyone's Internet access, but it does send out warnings and take increasingly intrusive steps to prod broadband subscribers to stop piracy. The system sent out more than 2 million warning letters to users in its first year, and the vast majority responded by stopping the infringements in short order.

Cox has a similar "graduated response" system, but it lacks the clarity and standardization of the other ISPs' effort. Rather than trying to impose new rules through the courts, the publishers should join Cox in making the existing warning system work for all concerned.

Income inequality kills growth Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Americans should be pleased at November's job figures released last Friday, which showed 321,000 new positions created and average weekly earnings for ordinary employees up 0.7 percent.

At the same time, the unemployment rate stayed stubbornly at 5.8 percent, and a scalding report released Tuesday by a global economic think tank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, underscored the negative relationship between income inequality and economic growth.

While the 34 member countries of the organization, the richest 10 percent earned

9.5 times as much as the poorest 10 percent. The companies with seven times as much in the 1980s. The report said the rich-poor gap is now the largest in 30 years.

The OECD estimates that the United States lost 6 to 7 percentage points in economic growth over that period due to income disparity. The report gauges that the economy of the United Kingdom would have grown an additional 20 percent if the income gap, enhanced by so-called "trickle-down" economic policies, had not worsened. A primary reason is the additional income, put in the hands of the rich by government policy, did not, in fact, trickle down.

As to November's U.S. jobs numbers, it still cannot be said that the country is experiencing a rapid recovery from the recession which started in 2007. One reason for the slowness of the turnaround is the chronic stagnation in middle-class wages. That leads to pallid personal consumption, which is the core of the U.S. economy.

The OECD prescription for income inequality is, first, higher taxes on those with greater incomes to pay a larger share of a country's expenses and, second, policies to raise the standard of living for the lower 40 percent on the income scale. If OECD's contention is correct that closing the wage gap would produce a bigger economic pie for everyone, then the policy change makes perfect sense.

An Obamacare success story San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News

As Republicans in Congress gear up in January for their most aggressive attack yet on President Barack Obama's health care reforms, here's something they probably won't mention: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced last week that U.S. health care spending grew just 3.6 percent in 2013.

That's the slowest growth rate on record since 1960 and the fifth straight year of low health spending growth. It's also less than half the average annual increase during President George W. Bush's eight years in office.

The Affordable Care Act isn't the whole reason. Continued recovery from the recession helps. But the drop in health insurance premium growth from 4 percent in 2012 to 2.8 percent last year indicates the president's reforms are working as planned.

That's just one measure of success. Here's another: The number of uninsured Americans has dropped from 21 percent to 13 percent of the population in just the past year. And that's before the upcoming enrollment period, when more citizens are expected to join the insured.

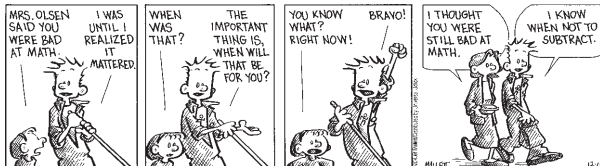
As to the charge that if the ACA went into effect, it would stifle medical innovation in the United States: The pharmaceutical industry announced that it would drop drug launches in 2013 than in any of the past 10 years.

These facts are extremely important since Democrats lost control of the Senate. With Republicans in charge of both houses of Congress, it's expected to be even bolder in fighting the president's chief domestic legacy regardless of its successes.

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is expected to lead the charge to end the individual mandate, which Obama reluctantly accepted to help make the financing work. Republicans are also expected to require that employers with more than 50 full-time workers offer some form of health care insurance or pay a fine. If nothing else, the GOP wants to force the president into a vote of two of the least popular aspects of the Affordable Care Act.

While the 34 member countries have been inexplicably shy about promoting the Affordable Care Act's accomplishments, if he had made a campaign pledge to cut the rate of increase of the nation's health care spending in half while at the same time bringing insurance to millions of uninsured Americans, would you have believed him? Yet it's true. Talk it up.

Frazz



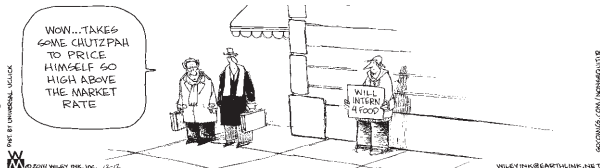
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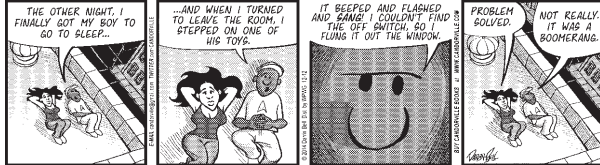
Pearls Before Swine



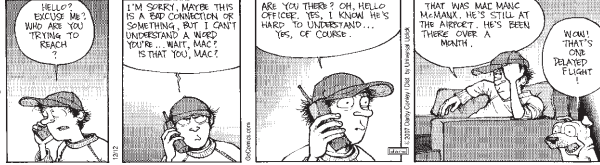
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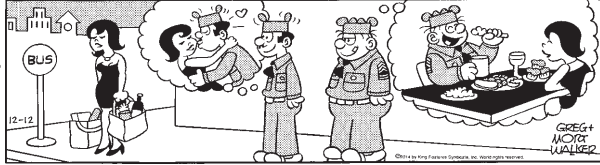
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



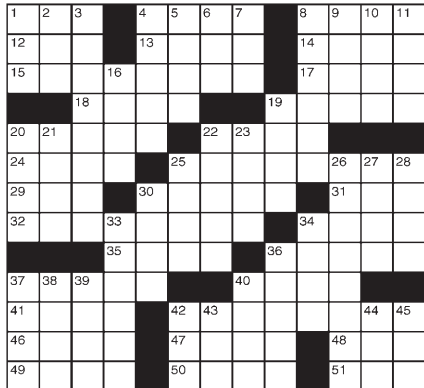
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Sandwich meat
- 4 Rat's challenge
- 8 Pleads
- 12 Id counterpart
- 13 Talon
- 14 Between jobs
- 15 Homeowner's payment
- 17 Acute
- 18 Spud's buds
- 19 Reinforced, in a way
- 20 Incline
- 22 Emerald City visitor
- 24 Inlet
- 25 Actress Emily
- 29 Time of your life?
- 30 Long stories
- 31 Praise in verse
- 32 Casablanca denizen
- 34 Plumbing problem
- 35 Joel or Ethan of Hollywood
- 36 Singing ability (SL)
- 37 Get more magazines
- 40 Mediocre
- 41 Branch-leaf angle
- 42 Virtue
- 46 NFL Hall-of-Famer Marchetti
- 47 Microwave, e.g.

DOWN

- 1 Height of fashion?
- 2 Back
- 3 And
- 4 "NCIS" techie
- 5 "Sad to say..."
- 6 Sharp turn
- 7 Ram's mate
- 8 Revealing swimwear
- 9 Paradise
- 10 Merriment
- 11 Transmit
- 16 Work at the key-board
- 19 Many, many
- 20 Hoodwink
- 21 Trademark symbol
- 22 Boston airport
- 23 Mideast nation
- 25 Spiked club
- 26 Transforming via CGI
- 27 Adams or Falco
- 28 Congress folks
- 30 Garbage barge
- 33 Feral feline
- 34 Use a rotary phone
- 36 Flat surface
- 37 Tatters
- 38 Egress
- 39 Baseball team
- 42 Do some yard-work
- 43 Eggs
- 44 X rating?
- 45 Second person

Answer to Previous Puzzle



12-12

CRYPTOQUIP

OE ERD SXAWOID BCEDPCDE

WOQD, RSCHPK XOEPVCA OPD

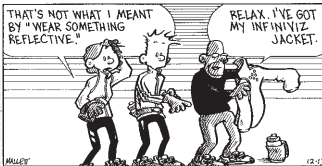
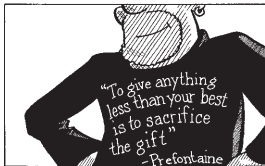
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XBD O IO YVZDY.

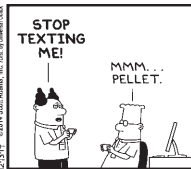
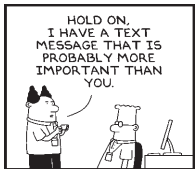
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BEFORE THE TROOPS ADVANCED TO BEG FOR HANDOUTS, THEIR SUPERIORS GAVE THEM MOOCHING ORDERS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals A

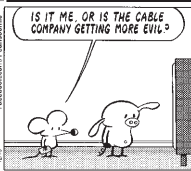
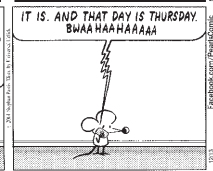
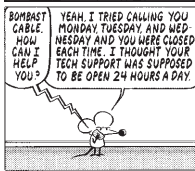
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



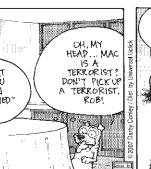
Non Sequitur



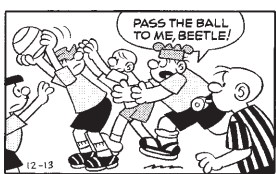
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18					19				20			
				21	22			23	24			
25	26	27						28		29	30	31
32								33				
34					35			36				
				37				38				
39	40	41			42	43			44	45	46	47
48					49				50			
51					52				53			
54					55				56			

ACROSS

- "Buffy" creator Whedon
- Goblet feature
- "Terrific"
- Black, to poets
- Traverse the runway
- Exist
- Missile shelter
- Showed contrition
- Mis' neighbors
- Pack away
- 19S dispenser
- Castle protection
- Treasure hunter's aid
- Country club employee
- Slippups
- Pad
- Perhaps
- Miss America's adornment
- Oktoberfest vests
- Wonka portrayal
- Legislation
- Toothshed item
- Four-star review
- Brewery product
- Sword handle
- "The Greatest"
- Swizzle
- Bloodhound's

DOWN

- Brillo rival
- Quaker pronoun
- Sulk
- School org.
- Longings
- Differently
- Zooey's "New Girl" role
- Last write-up
- Unaccompanied
- Winter transport
- Handbag handles
- Not slack
- Off the hook
- Central
- Gambling game
- Neighborhood
- Primo
- RV, e.g.
- Sports venue
- Proportion
- North Sea feeder
- Snitch
- Reuben holder
- Young bloke
- Before
- Paving goop
- Wrap
- "the fire?"
- Laryngitic sound
- Oodles
- Passport endorsement
- Property claim
- "American —"
- Prunes
- Squirrel's home
- Pigpen

Answer to Previous Puzzle

H	A	M	M	A	Z	E	B	E	G	S
E	G	O	G	C	L	A	W	I	D	L
M	O	R	T	A	G	E	K	E	E	N
E	Y	E	S							
S	L	O	P	E		L	I	O	N	
C	O	V	E			M	O	R	T	I
A	G	E		S	A	G	A	S		O
M	O	R	O		C	C	A	N		D
				C	O	E	N		P	I
R	E	N	E	W				B	L	A
A	X	I	L		M	O	R	A	L	I
G	I	N	O		O	V	E	N		N
S	T	E	T		W	A	D	E		G

12-13

CRYPTOQUIP

DH JAGI JQI JY USNG UG
RDCM JASJ SFSQJUGMJ
VYMQSVJ, D'XX JSNG JAG

FSJA YH XGSRG QGRDRJSMVG.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AT THE UPSCALE INTERNET CAFE, HUNGRY PATRONS ARE OFFERED COMPLIMENTARY PIE A LA MODEM.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals L

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Jewel thieves follow, then attack victims

MN MARION TOWNSHIP — Investigators believe jewelry thieves followed their victims for several hundred miles from a trade show in Chicago before pulling off a \$500,000 heist in less than 2 minutes at a rest stop in southeast Minnesota.

The smash-and-grab robbery occurred early Monday morning at a rest stop along Interstate 90, according to Olmsted County Sheriff's officials.

Local authorities have contacted the FBI and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to help investigate. The loss value could climb once the dealer does a complete inventory of his jewelry and precious metals, sheriff's Capt. Scott Behrns said.

3 killed at scene of car crash with bear

FL MIAMI — Three good Samaritans were killed Sunday night when they were struck by a car after they'd stopped along a dark, two-lane road in the Florida Everglades to assist another motorist whose vehicle hit a black bear.

The accident took place on Snake Road, in the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation, about halfway between Fort Lauderdale and Naples.

Seminole police spokesman Gary Bitner told The Associated Press that Caroline Billie was driving a sport utility vehicle when she saw the bear crossing the road just before 7 p.m. Sunday and couldn't stop in time to avoid hitting it. A short time later, three vehicles that were traveling together stopped on the side of the road to assist the woman.

Another vehicle, heading in the opposite direction and driven by Gary McInturff, of Hollywood, hit the SUV and sideswiped one of the stopped vehicles, sending it into the people standing on the road's shoulder, Bitner said. Three people were killed, and five of the injured were treated and released.

Troopers help deliver baby in parking lot

OH DEFIANCE — Troopers in northwestern Ohio helped deliver a baby girl in the parking lot of their State Highway Patrol post.

Three troopers and a sheriff's deputy jumped into action early Monday in Defiance when a woman driving her pregnant granddaughter to the hospital realized they weren't going to make it. They pulled into the patrol post's parking lot where the baby was delivered around 10 a.m.

The troopers say both the baby and the mom were taken to the Defiance Regional Medical Center where they are doing just fine.

Rescue Mission ends no-strings shelter

KS WICHITA — The Union Rescue Mission in Wichita is evaluating a decision to end a policy of providing a bed and food for the homeless with no strings attached.

THE CENSUS

240

The number of hours a French tourist will have to spend cleaning a Manhattan jail for scaling the Brooklyn Bridge to take photos. Yonathan Soud, of Esnandes, France, got the community service sentence on Tuesday. His lawyer said Soud "prefers cleaning a jail than to actually living in one." Soud said it wasn't his intention to hurt anyone and he climbed the bridge last month because he has a passion for photography.



MATT ROURKE/AP

Blowin' in the wind

A women's umbrella is upset by the wind during a rainstorm Tuesday in Philadelphia.

The mission decided to phase out the policy after realizing some men had used the mission for decades. Now, it is experimenting with programs designed to help the men move on, without shutting the doors on them.

Director Denny Bender said the mission hasn't seen as much progress as he'd hoped. But it has been able to allocate 10 beds a night for a program that provides a place to stay for men who work but are still homeless.

Man, 102, dies after receiving Scout award

PA CARNEGIE — A 102-year-old Pittsburgh-area man died a day after receiving the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award from the Boy Scouts of America.

Esther Queneau told the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review that her husband, Bernard, "just hung on" so he could receive the award Saturday. That also happened to be her 90th birthday.

The Scott Township man died Sunday, a day after receiving the

honor from the Laurel Highlands Boy Scout Council and the National Eagle Scout Association.

Bernard Queneau volunteered for 20 years with Meals on Wheels, volunteered at a local library and as an escort at St. Clair Hospital.

Inmates work as elves for charity gift program

ND BISMARCK — North Dakota inmates are helping bring holiday cheer to Bismarck by working as Santa's elves for a charity gift-giving program.

The minimum-security inmates at the Missouri River Correctional Center have been fixing toys and bicycles as part of the 2014 Christmas Playpen project, the Bismarck Tribune reported.

The project is a partnership between several local entities, including the newspaper and the North Dakota Department of Corrections, to collect and refurbish toys that the Salvation Army distributes to qualifying families during the holidays.

The Missouri River inmates also planned to fix up nearly

300 bikes by Monday's deadline. The Salvation Army will give the bikes to families in the Bismarck and Mandan areas.

"It's something nice to do for the community," said inmate Brad Delzer.

Interstate speed limit raised from 65 to 70

UT SALT LAKE CITY — Motorists are now able to drive a little faster on most urban interstates along Utah's Wasatch Range.

With a few exceptions, the speed limit was raised from 65 mph to 70 mph beginning Monday.

The Utah Department of Transportation decided to proceed with the plan after hearing no arguments urging it to reconsider during a month of taking comments, said Jason Davis, its chief of operations.

Studies show the majority of traffic already travels at 70 mph or more on Wasatch Front interstates, he added.

Video of reunion with Marine has gone viral

MD ODENTON — The video is simple: A Maryland woman sneaks up to surprise her Marine husband, arriving at a California base after he served a year in Afghanistan.

She stands directly in front of him for about a minute before he realizes she's there. He spots her, puts his hand over his eyes and begins sobbing. Another soldier grabs the camera and films as the couple hugs and kisses.

Now, the video — shot about a month ago — has been viewed more than 1 million times on YouTube, and Gunnery Sgt. Fort Taylor III and his wife, Sara, of Odenton said they've heard from people all over the world who've seen it.

"This is crazy. We posted it mainly for us and the kids to see, and maybe some family and friends," Fort, 31, told The Associated Press from Odenton, where he's on leave through Christmas.

From wire reports



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STARS AND STRIPES

42.9M Americans have medical debt

The confusion tends to generate disputes from consumers about the unpaid debts. This has prompted the CFPB to also announce Thursday that it will require major consumer reporting agencies to provide regular reports on how they investigate and respond to disputed charges.

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.12
3-month bill	0.03
30-year bond	2.83

Dec. 10, 2014	
Dow Jones industrials	-268,05 17,533,15
Nasdaq composite	-82,44 4,684,03
Standard & Poor's 500	-33,68 2,026,14
Russell 2000	-26,19 1,161,86

SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC

CHINA

RUSSIA

Pacific Ocean

N. KOREA

Seoul 29/19

S. KOREA

Osan 30/21

Busan 41/26

Sea of Japan

JAPAN

Misawa 30/22

Tokyo 51/36

Iwakuni 44/34

Sasebo 47/39

Guam 85/80

Philippine Sea

Okinawa 63/55

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chattanooga	52	30	Cl	Fort Wayne	40	30	Cl	Louisville	45	33	PCldy	Pocatello	54	35	Cl	Sioux City	46	44	Cl
Abilene, Tex.	68	55	Cl	Cheyenne	63	33	PCldy	Fresno	58	43	Rain	Buckeye	67	47	PCldy	Portland, Maine	38	28	Cl	Sioux Falls	44	40	Cl
Akron, Ohio	36	28	Cl	Chicago	43	33	Cl	Grand Rapids	54	31	Cl	Macon	67	47	PCldy	Portland, Ore.	41	31	Cl	South Bend	41	31	Cl
Albany, N.Y.	47	31	Cl	Cincinnati	47	29	Cl	Grand Junction	54	31	Cl	Madison	67	31	Cl	Rockford	42	32	Cl	Spokane	42	32	Cl
Albuquerque	57	37	PCldy	Cleveland	37	29	Cl	Grand Rapids	40	30	PCldy	Medford	51	36	Rain	Pueblo	63	30	Cl	Springfield, Ill.	43	34	Cl
Albany, N.Y.	47	31	Cl	Colorado Springs	47	29	Cl	Helena	54	34	PCldy	Memphis	67	47	PCldy	Portland, Me.	38	28	Cl	Springfield, Mo.	52	43	Rain
Amarillo	67	41	Cl	Columbia, S.C.	59	30	Cl	Green Bay	34	28	Cl	Miami Beach	69	54	Cl	Rapid City	56	39	Cl	St. Paul	25	20	Cl
Anchorage	26	19	Cl	Columbus, Ga.	60	34	PCldy	Greensboro, N.C.	51	31	Cl	Midland-Odessa	70	52	PCldy	Reynolds	45	29	Rain	Tallahassee	62	33	Cl
Anchorage	26	19	Cl	Concord, N.H.	34	24	Cl	Hartford	37	28	PCldy	Minneapolis	67	47	PCldy	Rochester	42	32	Cl	Tampa	60	38	Cl
Atlantic City	41	29	Cl	Concord, N.H.	35	24	Cl	Hartford	37	28	PCldy	Miss-St. Paul	41	37	Cl	Rochester	42	32	Cl	Tampa	60	38	Cl
Atlantic City	41	29	Cl	Cornwall, Conn.	34	24	Cl	Hartford	37	28	PCldy	Miss-St. Paul	41	37	Cl	Rochester	42	32	Cl	Tampa	60	38	Cl
Atlanta	59	41	Cl	Cornwall, Conn.	34	24	Cl	Hartford	37	28	PCldy	Miss-St. Paul	41	37	Cl	Rochester	42	32	Cl	Tampa	60	38	Cl
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Baltimore	43	30	Cl	Dayton	38	27	PCldy	Houston	70	52	Cl	Montgomery	59	45	Cl	Sacramento	56	45	Rain	Tucson	76	52	Cl
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Birmingham	55	36	PCldy	Denver	65	36	Cl	Indianapolis	63	47	Cl	New Orleans	63	47	PCldy	St. Petersburg	64	52	Cl	Tulsa	64	35	PCldy
Birmingham	55	36	PCldy	Denver	65	36	Cl	Indianapolis	63	47	Cl	New Orleans	63	47	PCldy	St. Petersburg	64	52	Cl	Tulsa	64	35	PCldy
Birmingham	55	36	PCldy	Denver	65	36	Cl	Indianapolis	63	47	Cl	New Orleans	63	47	PCldy	St. Petersburg	64	52	Cl	Tulsa	64	35	PCldy
Birmingham	55	36	PCldy	Denver	65	36	Cl	Indianapolis	63	47	Cl	New Orleans	63	47	PCldy	St. Petersburg	64	52	Cl	Tulsa	64	35	PCldy
Birmingham	55	36	PCldy	Denver	65	36	Cl	Indianapolis	63	47	Cl	New Orleans	63	47	PCldy	St. Petersburg	64	52	Cl	Tulsa	64	35	PCldy
Birmingham	55	36	PCldy	Denver	65	36	Cl	Indianapolis	63	47	Cl	New Orleans	63	47	PCldy	St. Petersburg	64	52	Cl	Tulsa	64	35	PCldy
Birmingham	55	36	PCldy	Denver	65	36	Cl	Indianapolis	63	47	Cl	New Orleans	63	47	PCldy	St. Petersburg	64	52	Cl	Tulsa	64	35	PCldy
Birmingham	55	36	PCldy	Denver	65	36	Cl	Indianapolis	63	47	Cl	New Orleans	63	47	PCldy	St. Petersburg	64	52	Cl	Tulsa	64	35	PCldy
Birmingham	55	36	PCldy	Denver	65	36	Cl	Indianapolis	63	47	Cl	New Orleans	63	47	PCldy	St. Petersburg							

National temperature extremes
Hi: Wed., 82, at Yuma, Ariz.
Lo: Wed. 2 Alamosa, Colo.

HIGH SCHOOL: DODDS EUROPE

Game of the week

Basketball: SHAPE at K-town

Friday and Saturday

SHAPE's fairly had this date circled on its calendar.

The former Division II mainstay was boosted to the Division I level prior to this basketball season, switching the Spartans' championship competition from a crowded but familiar field of middle-sized schools to an imposing lineup of DODDS-Europe's populous heavyweights.

And when the schedule was released weeks later, one of those new divisional rivals was positioned to give the Spartans an early, pre-holiday test.

SHAPE opens its DODDS-Europe hoops schedule this weekend with a visit to Kaiserslautern, a returning entry on the revamped nine-team Division I roster. And while SHAPE presents as the new upstart in contrast to the divisional veteran Raiders, both schools are spending this portion of the season

simply finding their way.

The Spartans are returning just four combined players — three girls and one boy — from last year's basketball rosters. Coupled with the heightened title competition looming at season's end, it's clear that SHAPE has a lot to square away before the February postseason.

The Raiders, meanwhile, are dealing with their own period of transition. Each Kaiserslautern team is returning just three varsity players from last season and is under the direction of a new coach: Ramstein and Bitburg veteran Lin Hairstone has taken over the girls program, while stalwart Raider girls coach Corey Sullivan moved to the boys bench.

Whichever teams find success this weekend will enjoy a needed headstart on climbing up Division I's newly-extended ladder.

— Star and Stripes

Other key matchups

Basketball Brussels at Baumholder Brussels at ISB

Brussels at Baumholder,

Friday and Saturday

Brussels at International School of Brussels, Tuesday

The Brigands are going to earn their winter break. Brussels, defending Division III champions in both boys and girls hoops, will play Friday, Saturday and Tuesday before heading into the holiday.

First up is Baumholder, now a post-season rival after moving down from Division II to Division III. The schools haven't shared the hardwood since February of 2013, when the Bucs boys swept the Brigands and the Brussels girls returned the favor.

Tuesday's opponent, meanwhile, is far more familiar — cross-town rival ISB. The Raiders aren't playing a DODDS-Europe schedule this season and won't take their usual place in the Division I European bracket in February. But the Raiders are still in line to face their in-tranquity foe; ISB took all four combined boys and girls meetings last season.

Basketball Naples at Aviano

Friday and Saturday

Though realignment stripped divisional significance from this matchup, the Wildcats and Saints remain regional foes, and the rivalry remains relevant.

While geography and history are at play here, the evenly-matched teams on the court are what make this set of boys and girls games compelling.

The Naples girls are looking to establish themselves as threats to the Division I hierarchy much like the school's girls volleyball team proved to be in the fall. That effort started last weekend in undefeated, if not dominant, fashion, with a pair of five-point wins over Division III Signella.

Aviano should offer a similar challenge. A preseason favorite in the streamlined Division II field, the Saints boast seven returning contributors, including starters Jasmine Cole and Victoria Vigil.

A similar dynamic is at work in the boys game. An inexperienced Naples squad started off with a win over Signella but fell victim to a Chris Moore buzzer-beater in dropping Saturday's rematch. Aviano, which returns four starters and nine total varsity players, cruised past AOSR.

Weekend peek

Patch, Ramstein start anew

By GREGORY BROOME

Stars and Stripes

A season-long struggle on the DODDS Europe wrestling mats begins Saturday at Stuttgart. This weekend's four-team meet, hosted by defending European champion Patch, is the first time this year the Panthers will face off against the Ramstein Royals.

Patch and Ramstein have dominated DODDS Europe wrestling for the past decade. The Royals won the team title every season from 2004 through 2008 before finally yielding to rising Patch. The Panthers took over with a years-long streak of their own lasting from 2009 to 2012.

Over the last two years, however, those alternating dynasties have morphed into a season-by-season battle for supremacy. The Royals broke through in 2013 behind a deep roster of points-winning wrestlers. The Panthers used the same formula last February in taking back their crown.

Patch holds the apparent edge this year based on returning talent and overall experience, but those aren't the only factors that determine wrestling success. Well-worn ideas of seniority and hierarchy don't neatly translate into the technical language of the sport, and a sufficiently talented new contender can supplant an established champ if he or she is the better competitor.

That's what Ramstein is banking on this winter. The Royals return just seven wrestlers from last year, including just three who placed at the European tournament last season, in contrast to Patch's corps of 22 returnees.

But last weekend's season-opening meet gave Ramstein cause for optimism. The Royals thumped a five-team field that included Division I rival Kaiserslautern and a strong entry from Baumholder. Six Royals, ranging from 106-pounder Josh Garcia to heavyweight Erik Gerena, won their weight-class pools.

Whether it needed it or not, Patch got similar validation in its opening meet, a runaway win over D-I rivals Wiesbaden and



MICHAEL ADAMS/Stars and Stripes

Patch's Robert Call, wrestles Wiesbaden's Matthew Hall in the 132-pound title match at last season's DODDS-Europe wrestling championships in Wiesbaden, Germany, Saturday, Feb. 15, 2014.

Vilseck along with Hohenfels and Ansbach. The Panthers too won six classes, including a win at 138 pounds for reigning 132-pound European champion Robert Call.

While the Royals and Panthers renew acquaintances this weekend from the first time since last February, they'll have plenty more opportunities to get familiar. The teams are slotted into the same meet three more times after the holiday break before meeting at the European championships Feb. 13-14 at Wiesbaden.



Follow the action
Gregory Broome has
the latest on Twitter
@broomestripes

Schedule

Basketball Friday

Brussels at Baumholder; Ramstein at Bitburg; Brussels at Baumholder; SHAPE at Kaiserslautern; Wiesbaden, American School of London at Lakenheath; Patch at Ansbach; Hohenfels at Vilseck; Naples at Aviano; Marymount at Vicenza; Signella at AOSR

Saturday

AFNORTH, International School of Brussels at Luxembourg; Bitburg at Ramstein; Brussels at Baumholder; SHAPE at Kaiserslautern; Wiesbaden, American School of London at Lakenheath; Patch at Ansbach; Vilseck at Hohenfels; Naples at Aviano; Marymount at Vicenza; Signella at AOSR

Tuesday

Brussels at International School of Brussels

Wrestling

Saturday

Kaiserslautern, Lakenheath, Alconbury, Brussels at SHAPE; Bitburg, Baumholder, AFNORTH, Hohenfels, Vilseck, BFA at Patch; Vicenza, Aviano, AOSR, Signella at Naples

Marksmanhip

Saturday

Alconbury competes remotely; Wiesbaden, Kaiserslautern at Patch; Ansbach, Hohenfels, Vicenza at Vilseck

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STARS AND STRIPES

HIGH SCHOOL: DODDS-PACIFIC

Game of the week

Boys basketball: Kadena (2-0) vs. Kubasaki (3-0)

When: 6:30 p.m. Friday.

Where: Kubasaki High School.

What: First of four regular-season meetings between the closest rivals in DODDS-Pacific in terms of distance apart (3 miles) and DODDS-Pacific Far East Division I Tournament title cachet. Kubasaki, established in 1946, has won 11 D-I championships, the first one in 1956. Kadena, which opened in 1981, has five championships, the first one three years after the school opened, in 1984. The two teams have played each other for the D-I championship three times, the Panthers winning all three, 64-55 in 1991, 70-69 in double overtime in 1992 and 69-44 in 1995.

Players to watch: Skylor Stevens, who transferred from Kadena, has averaged 14.3 points and Nick Ashley 13.7 in

the Dragons' first three games, all home wins, 78-39 over Okinawa Christian, 87-60 over Ginowan and 84-74 over Zion Christian. Justin Wilson, a sophomore forward, has averaged 14.3 points in the Panthers' first two games, each home wins, 83-74 over ZCAI and 87-72 over Kitakagusuku.

Also: Jon Fick, in his ninth year coaching the Dragons, has won three Far East D-I tournament titles, one behind the tournament record of four set by Gene Fitzgerald of Christian Academy Japan from 1970-73. ... Gerald Johnson has been with the Panthers program for nine years as an assistant or head coach and was part of a Kadena team that won the title in 2010.

— Stars and Stripes

Schedule

Basketball

Boys Friday

American School in Japan at St. Mary's; YIS-Seoul at Seoul Foreign, Taejon Christian at Humphreys; Kadena at Kubasaki

Friday-Saturday

Kinnick at Edgren, Zama at Perry, Yokota at King

Saturday

Christian Academy Japan at Yokohama; Daegu at Seoul American, Taejon Christian at YIS-Seoul; Naha at Kadena

Girls

Friday

YIS-Seoul at Seoul Foreign, Taejon Christian at Humphreys; **Guam quarterfinals:** Harvest Christian at Okkodo, St. Paul Christian at Southern; Guam at John F. Kennedy

Friday-Saturday

Kinnick at Edgren, Zama at Perry, Yokota at King; Kadena at Kubasaki

Saturday

CAJ at Yokohama; Daegu at Seoul American, Taejon Christian at YIS-Seoul; Naha Kokusai at Kubasaki; **Guam quarterfinal:** Academy of Our Lady at Notre Dame

Wrestling

Saturday

DODDS-Japan tri-duals at Zama; All Korea schools at Daegu

Guam baseball

Postseason

Quarterfinals

Saturday

Tiyan vs. Father Duenas at Paseo Stadium, Hagatna, 10 a.m.; George Washington vs. Simon Sanchez at Okkodo, 12:30 p.m.; John F. Kennedy at Okkodo, 10 a.m.; Guam vs. Southern at George Washington, 10 a.m.



DAVE ORNAUER/Stars and Stripes

Skylor Stevens, a junior playing for Kubasaki, started his high school career at Kadena, following in the footsteps of his father, Jason, and uncle, Travis. The rivalry might not be as cantankerous as it used to be, but it's still intense on the court.

Three more key matchups

Girls basketball Kadena at Kubasaki

Friday, 5 p.m.

Each team is seeking its first win. The Panthers have lost two road games to Japanese teams and the Dragons fell in their opener at home to Kitakana.

Girls basketball Guam at J.F. Kennedy

Friday, 6 p.m.

The Panthers reaching the Independent Interscholastic Athletic Association of Guam playoffs for the first time in five years. Second-team All-Island guard Jaliynn Jones and the seventh-place Panthers visit the second-place Islanders.

Boys basketball Daegu at Seoul American

Saturday, 1:30 p.m.

Rematch of the finals of last season's Korean-American Interscholastic Activities Conference Blue-Division Tournament final, won by the eventual Far East Division II champion Warriors 60-59.

Weekend peek

Dragons, Panthers getting back at it

By DAVE ORNAUER

Stars and Stripes

KADENA AIR BASE, Okinawa

— Invariably, the conversation turns to basketball — Kadena vs. Kubasaki basketball — whenever junior forward Skylor Stevens, his father, Jason, and uncle, Travis, get together.

They talk of the rivalry between the two schools, which began in 1981 when Kadena opened its doors (Kubasaki opened in 1946). The games are often intense between teams whose schools stand three miles apart and where green and white and black and gold run as thick as blood.

That rivalry resumes Friday, when the Panthers and Dragons girls, each seeking their first wins, take the court at 5 p.m. and the boys, Kadena unbeaten through two games and Kubasaki three, follow at 6:30 p.m.

"My dad and uncle talk about it all the time," said Skylor, a sophomore who a year ago played for Kadena but transferred to Kubasaki, where his mom Miki teaches. Jason teaches at Kadena Middle School.

Skylor's father, who played for Kadena in the mid-1980s and won Far East Division I titles in 1986 and '87, "says the rivalry ... was bigger back then, because Kadena and Kubasaki players didn't really hang out or talk to each other like we do now," Skylor said.

Travis Stevens, who now teaches at The Sullivan Elementary School at Yokosuka Naval Base, followed in Jason Stevens' foot-

steps, and was part of a Kadena team that played against Kubasaki in one of the greatest Far East Division I title games ever played, in 1992.

Things have changed since those early days of arguably the biggest rivalry in the Pacific regardless of sport.

Where in the 1980s, fans of each team would greet their opposites with boos and rancor, that's given over to what Panthers senior girls forward Jasmine Rhodes terms "respect" and "sportsmanship."

What makes the rivalry so special?

Don Hobbs, now the DODDS-Pacific athletics coordinator, was Kubasaki's boys coach in the 1980s and 1990s, when the vitriol between the schools gradually gave way to that respect.

Perhaps the big turning point was the 1992 Far East D-I Tournament final, Kubasaki at Kadena, played before an overflow crowd at the Panther Pit. Substitute guard Colbey Hicks hit a running layup with four seconds left, giving Kadena a 70-69 double-overtime win.

Afterwards, players shook hands, hugged and slapped backs and the fans of both sides stood on their feet in appreciation of both teams.

"It wasn't hateful or spiteful," Hobbs said. "We were rivals when the ball was thrown into the air, but I'd like to think (Kadena coach) Scott Davis and I were good friends. And the players knew each other. The key word was they respected each other."

"You're personally familiar, with you, you with them, for years sometimes," Kadena's current coach Gerald Johnson said. "Bragging rights, school pride, the schools' closeness, they're big factors, they play into it."

Getting to know Kubasaki coach Jon Fick and having a collegial relationship with him is part of the rivalry's charm, Johnson said. "It's fun, it's special, to play opposite each other," he said.

Jason and Miki Stevens plan to have front-row seats at the Dragons Den when the schools tee it up and the rivalry resumes once more.

"I can't wait," Skylor Stevens said.

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

ARMY VS. NAVY

Rookie coach Monken eager to end streak

Army seeking first win over archrival Navy after 12 straight losses

By JOHN KEKIS
The Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — When Jeff Monken awakens every morning only one thing is on his mind, and it's been that way since he was hired as head coach at Army a year ago: #BEATNAVY. "That's the No. 1 objective," Monken said.

He gets his first chance on Saturday at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore when the archrivals meet for the 115th time. Navy leads the series with Army 58-49-7, thanks to its current streak of 12 straight wins.

The 47-year-old Monken was hired last December to turn around a program that's been mostly down for nearly two decades. He's produced four wins in his first season with one game remaining, but two preseason goals have not been accomplished.

Army (4-7) did not win the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy, emblematic of supremacy among the three service academies. Air Force (9-3) beat both Army and

Navy (6-5) to win the prestigious hardware. And the Black Knights did not attain six wins to qualify for the Armed Forces Bowl, which means they'll go into the offseason after Saturday's game knowing the Middies and Falcons will still be playing.

Still, Monken can make a real statement with a victory.

"This being our last game, we'll try to play the best that we've played all year," Monken said Tuesday. "We don't feel like we've played a complete game from start to finish. I can't think of a better football game to do that in."

Jim Young resurrected Army football after taking over as head coach in 1983. He produced a consistent winner for a program that had just three winning seasons in 14 years and went 5-3 against Navy before Bob Sutton succeeded him in 1991. Between the two men, their teams beat the Middies 10 times in a 13-year span.

What happened to Sutton paints a picture of the amount of

pressure Monken faces. Sutton was fired on a Philadelphia street after Navy posted a 19-0 victory in 1999 — a mere three years after he was named national coach of the year for guiding the Black Knights to the lone 10-win season in academy history.

Navy has dominated since, through an array of Army coaches. Among them, only Todd Berry got the job done against Navy — once, 26-17 in 2001 — and he was the architect of the worst team in West Point history, the 0-13 Black Knights of 2003.

At least Monken might have an ace up his sleeve. He was a former assistant at Navy under Paul Johnson, who rebuilt the program much like Young did at West Point. Johnson's Middies beat Army 58-12 in the season finale of his rookie season in 2002, just their second victory in 12 games.

"I think the situation is eerily similar to the one we went into at Navy prior to the 2002 season," Monken said. "I'm glad I had that experience under coach Johnson, seeing the changes that



JOHN MEHRE, TIMES HERALD-RECORD/AP

Army coach Jeff Monken has been focused on beating Navy since he took over the football program last year. He'll get his first chance on Saturday in Baltimore.

were made that really impacted our ability and opportunities for our players to succeed and have a winning football program."

After Army beat FCS powerhouse Fordham 42-31 in the home finale at Michie Stadium on the Saturday before Thanksgiving,

Monken gave the Black Knights the holiday weekend off to help get the team refreshed physically for the big game, though he says some injuries linger.

"Hopefully, that extra time is going to be a positive for us," he said.

Navy's Niumatalolo can set records with victory

By DAVID GINSBURG
The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Ken Niumatalolo learned the X's and O's of college football from a variety of mentors, most notably Paul Johnson, his predecessor at Navy.

But what most separates Niumatalolo from his peers was a life lesson provided by his father.

With a victory over Army on Saturday, the 49-year-old Niumatalolo will become the winningest coach in Navy history. Now in his seventh season at the Academy, Niumatalolo (55-35) passed Johnson on the win list last year and is currently tied with George Welsh, a member of the College Football Hall of Fame who won 55-46-1 from 1973-81.



ERIC GAY/AP

Navy head coach Ken Niumatalolo will become the winningest football coach in Navy history — and the first to go 7-0 against Army — with a victory on Saturday. Now in his seventh season with the Midshipmen, Niumatalolo is 55-35.

Coast Guard for 23 years before becoming a restaurant manager.

"I remember as a boy going to the restaurant, Dad would be in the kitchen cooking. He didn't sit up in his manager's office and say, 'Hey, I need more of this.' He was cooking," Niumatalolo recalled. "He knew all the cooks' names, knew all the bakers' names, knew all the waiters' names. I didn't realize it, but I think it had an effect on me. I wanted to be the same way."

"Just because I was an assistant for 18 years, when I became the head coach I

didn't want to get up on the tower. I just wanted to be the same person."

As a backup quarterback at Hawaii, Niumatalolo lettered three years and was part of the Rainbows' first bowl team in 1989. His recollection of that time includes that treatment he received from the coaching staff.

"Being a guy that wasn't always in the limelight, when the coach knew your name or said hello to you, it meant a lot. So I wanted to be that guy, not someone who says 'Hey, No. 87,' or 'Hey, you, 22,'" Niumatalolo

said. "You need to know who the backup holder is or the backup snapper. I don't see how people can follow you if you don't care about them or know who they are."

Niumatalolo, is now poised to become the first at Navy to go 7-0 against Army. With a win, he will stand alone as the winningest coach of a program that played its first game in 1879.

"I don't look at it as a record for me," he said. "Whether you're a head coach or the CEO of a company, there are so many people involved. In sports, players win games. I've been fortunate in that a lot of good players and a lot of great assistants have helped us be successful over the years."

Niumatalolo was an assistant at Navy before becoming college football's first Samoan head coach in 2008 after Johnson went to Georgia Tech. Johnson left Niumatalolo the blueprint for the esteemed triple-option attack, which Navy has used brilliantly to compensate for its lack of size and weight against such foes as Notre Dame and Ohio State.

"They give everybody fits," Army coach Jeff Monken said. "They're doing such a great job not only against the other academics, but everybody they face."

Niumatalolo beat Notre Dame in 2009 and 2010, and he also owns wins over Missouri, Rutgers and Indiana. He will guide Navy in the Poinsettia Bowl against San Diego State later this month.

"I know how well coached they are and how well prepared their teams are," Monken said. "I have great respect for Ken."

The Midshipmen feel the same way.

"He's really personable, he loves his players," senior fullback Noah Copeland said. "We've not just football players, we're actually like his kids. He takes care of us and loves us."

"I guess the word I think about is honored, just honored to be mentioned with those guys," Niumatalolo said. "There have been a lot of great football coaches that have come through here and helped build this program."

"We're not just football players, we're actually like his kids."

Noah Copeland
Navy fullback

preparation extends far beyond watching film, drawing up game plans and adjusting to his players' hectic schedules.

"One thing about coach Ken, he's so personable. He knows everybody on the team," senior co-captain Parrish Gaines said. "We have 150-some odd guys and he knows all of my teammates, all of the freshmen by name — as soon as they get here."

It is a trait Niumatalolo inherited from his father, who served as a cook in the

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Bigger than a game, more than a rivalry

Army-Navy gridiron showdown rooted in mutual respect

By DAVID GINSBURG
The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Not many players have to wake up before dawn, fulfill military obligations, attend classes and then grind through football practice.

For the athletes at Army and Navy, it's all in a day's work.

That is why respect is the operative word in this longtime rivalry.

With the exception of their game against Air Force, the Cadets and Midshipmen usually go up against players who have no idea what it takes to play football for a military academy.

"I know how hard our school is, and I can only imagine how hard their school is," Navy senior captain Parrish Gaines said. "My respect for these guys, it goes way past this game. The respect you've got to have for them is bigger than a football game."

"Those guys do what we do, day in, day out. They're struggling with the same battles, they have the same sleep habits we do."

At Army and Navy, sleep is a luxury when there's so much to accomplish during a typical day. Things are also different on the football field, compared to most Division I schools.

"We've all been told we're not the biggest, not the fastest and not the strongest, but we all play with a chip on our shoulders," Navy fullback Noah Copeland said.

For 60 minutes this Saturday, Army and Navy will do whatever it takes to win. Afterward, as a show of unity, the players and coaches will stand at attention while the bands play the alma mater of each school.

"The thing that's always cool is, as bad as we want to beat them and as bad as they want to beat us, there's a great amount of respect between both schools," Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo said. "The sportsmanship after, by us singing each other's alma mater shows that. In a sport where everyone's talking about who's going to be in the top four, it's cool to have two teams that just



JACQUELINE LARMA/AP

In this Dec. 11, 2010, file photo, Navy Midshipmen celebrate after Navy scored a touchdown late in the second quarter of the 111th Army-Navy game in Philadelphia. It takes a special person to attend college classes, fulfill military obligations and hustle through football practice. And unlike the participants in Auburn-Alabama and Michigan-Ohio State, who will sometimes meet again on the field at an NFL game, for the players at Army and Navy, there's a good chance their next meeting will come when they are fulfilling their military obligations together overseas.

play a rivalry for the pure competition."

After they're done playing college football, the participants in Auburn-Alabama and Michigan-Ohio State sometimes meet again on the field at an NFL game. For Army and Navy, there's a good chance the players will be fulfilling their military obligation together overseas.

"We just respect each other because after this game we're going to be brothers in the fleet," Copeland said. "I've been selected to be a Marine Corps officer, and hopefully I can do that. I'm leaning toward infantry. So someone I play against Saturday could

end up being the guy right next to me."

That's one reason why there are seldom any fights or dirty hits.

"Mostly it's good sportsmanship, helping those guys up," Parrish said.

Navy has won 12 in a row, the longest such run by either team in a series that dates back to 1890. Instead of harboring jealousy or resentment, Army defensive end Joe Drummond spoke respectfully about his foe.

"The Naval Academy has just been able to put together a great program that's had tremendous success," he said. "They do a

great job executing their assignments and play with an intensity that is unmatched around the country. Having an opportunity to play on the same field with them, and knowing we're going to on the same team upon graduation, gives the rivalry more luster."

Teammate Raymond Maples, who received a medical redshirt to play his final season, added: "I have a lot of respect for them, and not just because of what they stand for. At the end of the day, we both represent America's military. We're brothers in arms."

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Badgers look to move quickly on new coach

Wisconsin AD could coach Outback Bowl

By TODD RICHMOND
AND GENARO C. ARMAS
The Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin athletic director Barry Alvarez hopes to move quickly to find a new head coach after Gary Andersen's stunning departure to Oregon State.

Alvarez hoped to have a replacement by the 17th-ranked Badgers' bowl game Jan. 1. Alvarez said that the Wisconsin seniors asked him to coach in the Outback Bowl against Auburn, and that he would soon make that decision.

Wisconsin got word that Andersen was leaving on the same day that Heisman Trophy finalist and running back Melvin Gordon officially announced he was skipping his senior year to enter the NFL draft.

"I think everybody was well aware that Melvin was going to go into the draft. Gary's announcement was definitely a surprise and shocking to those (players)," Alvarez said.

The Badgers seemed just as astonished on social media.

"That's crazy ... Literally out of nowhere," senior defensive tackle Warren Herring posted on Twitter.

Gordon had just one word response on Twitter after word had trickled out: "WOW!"

Andersen was 19-7 in his two seasons at Wisconsin. He was known for an even-keeled demeanor that seemed to calm his players in times of adversity.

As usual, Wisconsin relied on a tried-and-true running game on offense. The defense was ranked first in the country for much of the season, before a 59-0 loss to Ohio State at the Big Ten title game — what turned out to be Andersen's last game with Wisconsin.

Alvarez said he thought Andersen had done a good job. He said Andersen related well to the players and led the Badgers to 10 wins this season, calling the Ohio State loss "one game."

Alvarez said that he was waiting for a flight back to Madison in New York early



ANDY MANIS/AP

In this Nov. 29, 2014, file photo, Wisconsin coach Gary Andersen watches the first half of Wisconsin's game against Minnesota in Madison, Wis. Andersen is leaving Wisconsin to take head coaching job at Oregon State.

Wednesday afternoon when he got a call from associate athletic director Walter Dickey, who said Andersen had to tell him something. Not knowing when his flight might leave, Alvarez told Dickey to put Andersen on the phone.

According to Alvarez, that's when Andersen told him he was leaving for Oregon State as an opportunity for him and his family. "I had no idea this was in the works," Alvarez said.

"Gary felt like this was an opportunity for him and his family to get back to that part of the country."

Now Alvarez might have to step back on to the sideline again while he searches for permanent coach. Alvarez turned Wisconsin into a consistent Big Ten winner during a 16-year tenure on the sideline.

Bielema took over for Alvarez in 2006,

leaving abruptly for Arkansas following a victory in the 2012 Big Ten championship game.

Wisconsin hired Andersen away from the head coaching spot at Utah State a few weeks before the Rose Bowl. Alvarez coached that game while the program was in transition, and the Badgers lost 20-14 to Stanford.

Alvarez said he always keeps a short list of potential head coaches and hoped to hire one by the bowl game. He acknowledged that departures of Bielema and Andersen departures show that Wisconsin apparently isn't a destination job but felt he has a "great product" to offer the next coach.

"My phone's ringing off the hook already and word's just leaking out," Alvarez said. "I feel very confident we'll put a good coach in place. I told the kids that.

Our program won't take a step back. I know one thing, I'm not going to flinch."

One potential candidate could be former Wisconsin offensive coordinator Paul Chryst, who is the head coach at Pittsburgh. Chryst was born in Madison.

Seattle Seahawks offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell played at Wisconsin in the 1990s. He was not aware that Andersen had left for Oregon State when approached by reporters at Seahawks practice on Wednesday.

Bevell has interviewed for NFL head coaching jobs. When asked if he had entertained the idea of being a college head coach, Bevell said "Being a head coach someday is of interest to me. I would say I have thought about college. I don't know exactly at this point where it would be or what it would be but I do feel like I want to be a head coach someday."

Delany: 'Big five' conferences OK with four playoff spots

By RACHEL COHEN
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Five power conferences. Four spots in the College Football Playoff.

The leagues knew that when they helped create the new post-season system, now administrators, coaches, players and fans are living it for the first time.

Big Ten Commissioner Jim Delany experienced the anxiety of wondering whether his conference would be shut out when the inaugural playoff field was announced Sunday. Ohio State wound up getting in, with the Big 12 stuck on the outside.

"I would've been very disappointed" if the Buckeyes had been left out, Delany said Wednesday at the Intercollegiate Athletics Forum in Manhattan.

"But we knew when we went



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Jim Delany, Commissioner of the Big Ten Conference speaks during a news conference on Tuesday in New York.

'This is not going to change.'

Executive director of the CFP, on whether the four-team playoff could be expanded to eight schools in the near future

Bill Hancock

into this that either one or two or possibly three conferences might not be involved. I've been No. 3 in the BCS, and I was prepared to be out of it again, because that was the narrative."

College football leaders defended the BCS system through years of angst over whether it was the best method for crowning a national champion. That resistance eroded over time — and now the sport has a four-team playoff.

So cue the questions about whether that will soon expand to eight schools.

"This is not going to change," insisted Bill Hancock, the executive director of the CFP.

Of course, he used to say the same thing about the Bowl Championship Series when he served as its executive director. As Hancock also acknowledged Wednesday, "The appetite for college football is insatiable."

Hancock listed similar concerns about an eight-team playoff as college officials used to voice about the four-team model: the academic calendar, maintaining the importance of the regular season,

protecting the other bowls.

"We knew that four was on the south side of the tipping point, but no one knows where the tipping point is," he said after speaking on a panel at the event.

Ohio State and the Big 12's Baylor and TCU boasted similar resumes when the selection committee made its picks Sunday. Alabama, Oregon and Florida State were widely considered the top three teams.

For now, the leaders of the five power conferences are comfortable with the reality that at least one of them will be excluded from the playoff each year.

Delany was asked if the sting of exclusion would eventually spur his counterparts to expand the field.

He grinned and said, "Might, might not."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

HEISMAN TROPHY FINALIST

Not to be forgotten

Badgers RB Gordon doesn't want to be remembered as 'just another guy'

By GENARO C. ARMAS
The Associated Press

By the numbers

The voice sounded a little weary. The steps were a bit slow, at least compared to Melvin Gordon's usual gait around Camp Randall Stadium.

Nearing the end of a memorable season, 17th-ranked Wisconsin's star running back sounded and looked like he could use a pick-me-up days after his team's humbling 59-0 loss to Ohio State in the Big Ten title game.

Maybe a chance to win the Heisman Trophy on Saturday will cheer him up.

"You don't want to leave here just being another guy," Gordon said. "You want people to remember you."

He's already put together a remarkable year.

A Big Ten single-season record 2,336 yards rushing — the fourth-highest mark in NCAA history. Twenty-nine touchdowns. He is just Wisconsin's fourth finalist for the Heisman Trophy, joining fellow running backs and winners Alan Ameche (1954) and Ron Dayne (1999); and Montee Ball, who finished fourth in 2011 and finished with an NCAA-record 83 touchdowns.

Yet ask Gordon what he thinks he might be remembered for most, and he sounds a little down.

"I don't really know to be honest. Montee set the touchdown record. Ron — Mr. Dayne — he won the Heisman leading in rushing. I kind of got nothing," Gordon said in an interview Tuesday at the team's training facility.

Gordon did set the single-game record with 408 yards rushing against Nebraska last month. But he held the mark just for a week before it was broken by Oklahoma's Samaje Perine.

Gordon had to be reminded that he still owned several conference and school records. He's also averaging 7.6

29

Touchdowns scored by Wisconsin RB Melvin Gordon this season

2,336

Yards rushing for Gordon this season, a Big Ten season record

7.6

Gordon's career average yards per carry, a potential NCAA record

76

Yards gained by Gordon in a humbling loss to Ohio State last Saturday

SOURCE: The Associated Press

yards per carry for his career, which would set an NCAA record. Wisconsin finishes the season on New Year's Day at the Outback Bowl against No. 19 Auburn.

Winning the Heisman, though, might be a longshot at this point. Oregon quarterback Marcus Mariota is the clear front-runner. The blowout loss to the Buckeyes, in which Gordon ran for 76 yards on 26 carries,

didn't help.

"Yeah," Gordon said disappointingly when asked if the loss affected the race. "It definitely did, but you know, what can you do about it, man? That's how the cards played out."

He'll win votes for: The 408-yard game — through three quarters — against Nebraska in what was billed as a Heisman candidate duel with the Cornhuskers' Ameer Abdullah. A career rushing record in a league with a legacy of standout running backs. A good off-field reputation.

He'll lose votes for: A clunker in his last game against Ohio State. Week 2 against Western Illinois also still sticks out for a shocking lack of productivity — 38 yards on 17 carries. To be fair, the

Badgers were still experimenting at quarterback and won with a confidence-building outing for the passing game against a lower-division school. The offensive line didn't play well. Still, 38 yards? Against Western Illinois? Also, lackluster Big Ten schedule outside of Nebraska and Minnesota.

CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/AP

MELVIN GORDON, WISCONSIN

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

HEISMAN TROPHY FINALIST

MARCUS MARIOTA, OREGON



JIM GENSHEIMER, BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/TNS

Duck's Dynasty

Unassuming junior quarterback puts up brag-worthy season for Pac-12 champs

By ANNE M. PETERSON
The Associated Press

About the flashiest thing quarterback Marcus Mariota has done off the field all season is wear a T-shirt boldly emblazoned with the word "Success."

His showy moments have instead come during games for the playoff-bound Oregon Ducks: His touchdown flip against Wyoming, a creative on-the-run shovel pass against Michigan State, or a perfectly faked handoff for a keeper in the Pac-12 championship game against Arizona.

Spartans coach Mark Dantonio summed it up: "Mariota is an outstanding quarterback. What he does is lead. What he shows is toughness. And what he does is create."

Like Dantonio, all of Oregon and Mariota's opponents this season became big fans.

"He's tough to contain. You put pressure on him and he doesn't feel it. He escapes the pocket, throws the ball down the field,"

Stanford coach David Shaw said after Mariota and the Ducks routed the Cardinal 45-16 this season, summing up: "He's special."

Mariota goes into Saturday's Heisman Trophy ceremony as the clear front runner. Here's how he did it: Mariota set a Pac-12 record this season with 53 total touchdowns, including a school-record 38 via pass, 14 keepers and one TD reception. He leads the nation with 10 games of four or more touchdowns this season. His 38 touchdown passes are also an Oregon record.

Overall, Mariota has thrown for an Oregon record 3,783 yards and just two interceptions, and he's the Ducks' second-leading rusher with 669 yards.

The mobile junior from Hawaii has

thrown for at least one touchdown in each of the first 39 games he's played in at Oregon, an FBS-level record.

He has set seven different career and season Oregon records, and his 129 total touchdowns to date surpassed former Trojan Matt Barkley's previous Pac-12 career record of 122.

"He's so good. Somebody was talking to me the other day about how easy he makes it look sometimes. What he's doing is really difficult. His decision-making, competitiveness, his command of the team is so outstanding," Oregon coach Mark Helfrich said. "It's great to be around him because he makes you want to work harder as a coach. The other guys feed off of him."

Mariota, however, doesn't take any credit. The guys around him are what make him better, he says.

Soft-spoken, Mariota instead leads by example. When a player is hurt on the field, Mariota often stays to offer encouragement. Teammates have said they've never heard him raise his voice in anger.

"I don't care what anybody says, because he's the best quarterback in the nation," Colorado coach Mike MacIntyre said after Oregon routed the Buffaloes were routed 44-10 at Oregon.

The Ducks (12-1) defeated Arizona 51-13 to win the Pac-12 championship on Friday. They will face undefeated Florida State in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1 for a chance to play for a chance to play for the national championship game.

He'll win votes for: Three Heisman-worthy moments. Among his four touchdowns in Oregon's 48-14 victory over Wyoming was an acrobatic keeper where he somersaulted over receiver Keanon Lowe and a Cowboys defender for the touchdown. Then there was a creative shovel pass to freshman running back Royce Freeman that gave the Ducks a key first down in their 46-27 victory over Michigan State.

And although the Ducks would lose 31-24 to Arizona on Oct. 2, Mariota got creative to start the second quarter when he handed off Freeman, who lobbed the ball back to Mariota for a 28-yard touchdown.

He'll lose votes for: It's just not in Mariota's nature to promote himself. When he was consulted about a Heisman campaign, he said he didn't want Oregon to do anything. "I didn't really want all that attention," he said. "I'm glad they were kind of able to accept that and respect that decision."

By the numbers

53

Number of total TDs Mariota had in 2014, a Pac-12 record. He threw for a school-record 38.

4

Number of games Mariota has lost as the Ducks starting quarterback.

129

Number of total touchdowns in his career, passing the former Pac-12 record of 122 by USC's Matt Barkley.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

HEISMAN TROPHY FINALIST

AMARI COOPER, ALABAMA



Wide receiver Amari Cooper has been Alabama's biggest weapon by far, and one of the nation's most prolific receivers.

JONATHAN BACHMAN/AP

Tide flying high

Alabama's top weapon, believe it or not, is a receiver

By JOHN ZENOR
The Associated Press

ALABAMA receiver Amari Cooper blew past the defensive back on a deep post, and his offensive coordinator didn't even wait until the ball was in the air to celebrate.

Lane Kiffin raised his hands on the sideline to signal a touchdown. A little early — but he was right.

"I guess he's seen me do it," Cooper said.

Much of the country has by now.

Cooper has become easily the most dangerous weapon in a program normally defined by tailbacks and defense, while leading the top-ranked Crimson Tide into a College Football Playoff matchup with No. 4 Ohio State and becoming a Heisman Trophy finalist. The award will be presented Saturday night.

Cooper streaked 39 yards for a touchdown midway through the third quarter to spark a comeback win over Auburn in the regular-season finale, just

one of many plays that left the Tide celebrating and opponents dumbfounded.

Something no one — other than Kiffin, perhaps — could have seen coming: a Tide receiver producing 1,656 yards and 14 touchdowns and setting a Southeastern Conference record with 115 receptions. He has demolished previous Alabama marks for yards and catches.

It turned into a perfect combination of Kiffin, Cooper and first-year starting quarterback Blake Sims. Tailbacks T.J. Yeldon and Derrick Henry had to take a backseat to the passing game, at least by Alabama standards.

Cooper has even trumped the numbers produced by the Atlanta Falcons' Julio Jones, the Tide's last superstar receiver. Cooper ranks second nationally in both yards receiving and catches per game.

Praised by coach Nick Saban and teammates for his work ethic, Cooper has three 200-yard receiving performances this season. Tide receivers collectively had produced only two coming into the season.

"To do what he does every Saturday is impressive, man," Alabama tight end O.J. Howard said. "We're like, 'Wow.' We knew he could do it, but he's doing more. So that's impressive."

Ohio State coach Urban Meyer didn't need to dive too deep into film study to proclaim Cooper the nation's biggest downfield threat and "one of the best receivers ever to play college football."

He'll win votes for: Cooper was unstoppable in the Iron Bowl to end the regular season on a huge stage. He had 13 catches for 224 yards and touchdowns of 17, 39 and 75 yards. Then he set an SEC championship game record with 12 catches against Missouri.

But he'll lose them because: Desmond Howard (1991) and Tim Brown (1987) are the only wide receivers to win a Heisman. Unlike Cooper, both those winners also were stars in the return game. Cooper was only shut down once, when Arkansas held him to two catches for 22 yards, but like any receiver he had games in which he didn't put up eye-catching numbers.

NFL

Detroit avoiding drama

By NOAH TRISTER
The Associated Press

ALLEN PARK, Mich. — This is exactly the type of stretch that might have derailed Detroit's playoff hopes in recent years.

Three straight home games. All against teams with losing records. With the pressure of the postseason race hanging over every play.

"We don't take any game lightly," running back Joique Bell said. "It's hard to win games here in the NFL. It's the best players in the world."

The Lions have won two in a row, beating Chicago and Tampa Bay by identical 34-17 scores. The victories helped Detroit keep pace in a tight NFC playoff chase, and what's even more encouraging for this franchise and its long-frustrated fans is the way the Lions won. Gone were the fourth-quarter deficits Detroit faced so often earlier in the season. Instead, the Lions controlled both games down the stretch, doing exactly what was expected of a team with so much on the line.

There wasn't much drama. And so far, there's been no hint of a collapse like the one that cost Detroit a playoff spot last season.

"I think we're a better team than we were last year. Guys went through that experience last year," safety Glover Quin said. "If you can't lock in and buckle down for three weeks to make the playoffs, try to win the division, get a shot at a Super Bowl, then you're probably playing the game for the wrong reasons."

The Lions (9-4) trail first-place Green Bay by one game in the NFC North. If they beat Minnesota and Chicago in their next two games, they will almost certainly make the playoffs in some fashion.

Detroit put itself in solid shape for a playoff spot with close wins over New Orleans, Atlanta and Miami around mid-season, but the Lions then lost at Arizona and New England to fall into a more tenuous position. This stretch of home games against Chicago, Tampa Bay and Minnesota loomed. All three opponents looked beatable, but Detroit had trouble taking care of games like these last year, when the Lions dropped six of their last seven to finish 7-9.

Included in that slide were home losses against Tampa Bay and the New York Giants, both of whom finished below .500.

"We looked ahead," Bell said.



PAUL SANCTA/AP

Lions quarterback Matthew Stafford reacts after a touchdown by teammate Joique Bell during Sunday's game against Tampa Bay in Detroit.



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

Kansas City running back Jamaal Charles, left, celebrates his touchdown with Anthony Fasano during the first half of Sunday's game against Arizona in Glendale, Ariz. Kansas City has lost three in a row and on the verge of falling out of the playoff hunt.

Chiefs have hill to climb

KC must win at least 2 of last 3

By DAVE SKRETTA
The Associated Press

After the way the Kansas City Chiefs collapsed toward the end of last season, and especially in the playoffs, they arrived at training camp in July with the mantra of "finish."

"It didn't matter whether it was a drive, a game or the entire season.

Well, they haven't done a very good job of it lately.

The Chiefs have lost three straight beginning with a defeat to lowly Oakland, their opponent again on Sunday. What once was a team that was 7-3 and barreling toward the playoffs is now a team that must win at least two of its final three to qualify — and might just need a clean sweep.

"We face adversity each and every day," linebacker Joe Mays said. "It's easy to play well when you're winning. It's easy to accept coaching when you're winning. But when you're losing, that's when you have to step up and that's when you have to play better."

That's something that Kansas City never could do last season.

After winning two games the previous season, the Chiefs began coach Andy Reid's tenure by rattling off nine straight victories. They were suddenly the talk of

the NFL, the best record in the league. Then they went to AFC West-rival Denver and were flattened, 27-17.

The loss began a streak of three straight defeats not unlike this season's swoon.

And while Kansas City bounced back to win twice more, the Chiefs backed into the postseason with losses to Indianapolis and San Diego — granted, they rested nearly all their starters in the finale.

They didn't rest any of them in the playoffs, though. And after taking a 38-10 lead early in the third quarter, the Chiefs failed to finish.

Andrew Luck and the Colts stormed back to score the eventual winning touchdown on a 64-yard pass to TY Hilton with about 4 minutes left in the 45-44 victory, sending the Chiefs into an offseason with some very bruised egos.

"You do have to learn from that," Reid said. "We put an emphasis on finishing and so now you're down to three games and so you put the clutter of the playoffs and all that out of your mind, and you focus in on how to take care of the finish. You take care of the game that you can control and that's the one taking place this week."

Besides, it's not such a welcomed sight if they were to look ahead.

After playing the Raiders (2-11) at Arrowhead Stadium, the Chiefs finish up with a trip to Pittsburgh and a home game against San Diego, a pair of teams also in



RICK SCUTENBERG/AP

Kansas City tight end Travis Kelce fumbles the ball as Arizona cornerback Justin Bethel (28) defends.

the playoff mix.

"You know, you can't get to the end of the line unless you take that first step, and it starts Sunday," quarterback Alex Smith said. "Stay shortsighted, not getting ahead of yourself. Everything is right there, right in front of us."



GAMEDAY

WEEK 15

TELEVISED GAMES


**Pittsburgh Steelers (8-5)
at Atlanta Falcons (8-8)**

 AFN-Atlantic
7 p.m. Sunday CET
3 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Steelers lead 12-2-1.

Last meeting: Pittsburgh beat visiting Atlanta 15-9 in overtime on Sept. 12, 2010.

Notes: Steelers RB Le'Veon Bell last week became the second player in NFL history with 200-plus yards from scrimmage in three consecutive games (Walter Payton, 1977). ... Falcons QB Matt Ryan is 39-12 (.765) at the Georgia Dome with 84 TDs, 32 INTs and a 98 rating.

**Miami Dolphins (7-6)
at New England Patriots (10-3)**

 AFN-Sports
7 p.m. Sunday CET
3 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Dolphins lead 51-44.

Last meeting: Miami beat visiting New England 33-20 in the season opener on Sept. 7.

Notes: Dolphins QB Ryan Tannehill has won his past two starts against the Pats, passing for 490 yards with 5 TDs for a 101.7 rating. ... Patriots TE Rob Gronkowski is the 1st TD in NFL history with four 10-TD seasons. He needs 3 receiving yards to reach 1,000 for the second time (1,327 in 2011).

Marquee matchup

Dallas Cowboys (9-4) at Philadelphia Eagles (9-4)

AFN-Sports, 2:20 a.m. Monday CET, 10:20 a.m. Monday JKT

SERIES RECORD: Cowboys lead 59-48; Eagles have won the past two.

LAST MEETING: Eagles beat Cowboys 33-10 on Nov. 27 at Dallas.

COWBOYS OFFENSE: OVERALL (9), RUSH (3), PASS (18).

COWBOYS DEFENSE: OVERALL (22), RUSH (17), PASS (25).

EAGLES OFFENSE: OVERALL (5), RUSH (7), PASS (8).
EAGLES DEFENSE: OVERALL (24), RUSH (18), PASS (26).

STREAKS, STATS AND
NOTES: The Cowboys are

an NFL-best 6-0 on the

road this season. ... QB Tony

Romo ranks second in

the league with a 108.8

rating. He has a 125

rating on the road.

RB DeMarco

Murray leads the NFL with 1,606 rushing yards. Last week, he tied Hall of Famer Emmitt Smith for the most 100-yard rushing games by a Cowboy in a season (11). ... WR Dez Bryant has 1,000-plus yards (1,034) and 10-plus TDs (10) for the third consecutive season, tied for the longest streak in team history. ... TE Jason Witten needs four catches for an 11th consecutive season with 50-plus. ... Eagles QB Mark Sanchez has won both career starts against Dallas. ... RB LeSean McCoy has 290 rushing yards and 2 TDs in the past two meetings. He had 159 yards and a TD in the Week 13 meeting. ... RB Darren Sproles has 4 TDs (3 rushing, 1 punt return) in the past four home games. ... WR Jeremy Maclin has 47 catches for 664 yards and 6 TDs in the past seven games. ... Rookie WR Jordan Matthews has 5 TDs in the past six games, including the Week 13 meeting with Dallas. ... Philadelphia has 9 players with a return TD, tied for the most in a season in NFL history. ... LB Connor Barwin leads the NFC with 13 1/2 sacks.



Game capsules compiled from nflmedia.com

Dallas Cowboys running back DeMarco Murray rushed for 179 yards last week, giving him 11 100-yard games this season.
**RON T. ENNIS
FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM/TNS**

**Denver Broncos (10-3)
at San Diego Chargers (8-5)**

 AFN-Sports
10 p.m. Sunday CET
6 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Broncos lead 59-49-1.

Last meeting: Denver beat visiting San Diego 35-21 on Oct. 23.

Notes: Broncos QB Peyton Manning is tied for the NFL lead with 36 TD passes and is the only player in league history to have 35-plus in four seasons. ... Chargers TE Antonio Gates had 2 TD receptions in the last meeting. He needs one more to tie the Patriots' Rob Gronkowski as the only TEs in NFL history with four 10-TD seasons.

**San Francisco 49ers (7-6)
at Seattle Seahawks (9-4)**

 AFN-Xtra
10 p.m. Sunday CET
6 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Seahawks lead 16-15.

Last meeting: Seattle beat host San Francisco 19-3 on Nov. 27.

Notes: QB Colin Kaepernick has posted a 100-plus rating 16 times as a starter, and the 49ers are 15-1 in those games. ... Seahawks QB Russell Wilson is 3-0 at home against San Francisco and has a 103.9 rating. He has 37 TDs, 11 INTs and a 102.2 rating in 24 home starts (including playoffs).

Also on AFN: Houston Texans (7-6) at Indianapolis Colts (9-4), AFN-Xtra, 7 p.m. Sunday CET, 3 a.m. Monday JKT.
 Minnesota Vikings (6-7) at Detroit Lions (9-4), AFN-Atlantic, 10 p.m. Sunday CET, 6 a.m. Monday JKT.

EXPANDED STANDINGS

American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	East	PF	PA	Home	Away	AFC	NFC	Div
New England	10	3	0	.769	401	267	6-0-0	4-3-0	7-2-0	3-1-0	2-1-0	
Miami	7	6	0	.538	314	260	3-3-0	4-3-0	6-4-0	1-2-0	3-1-0	
Buffalo	7	6	0	.538	281	241	4-3-0	3-3-0	4-6-0	3-0-0	2-3-0	
N.Y. Jets	2	11	0	.154	214	349	2-5-0	0-6-0	2-7-0	0-4-0	0-4-0	
Indianapolis	9	4	0	.692	407	307	5-2-0	4-2-0	7-3-0	2-1-0	4-0-0	
Houston	7	6	0	.538	314	260	3-3-0	4-3-0	6-3-0	1-3-0	3-1-0	
Tennessee	2	11	0	.154	220	374	1-5-0	1-6-0	2-7-0	0-4-0	1-3-0	
Jacksonville	2	11	0	.154	199	356	2-5-0	0-6-0	1-8-0	1-3-0	0-4-0	
Cincinnati	8	4	1	.654	281	289	4-2-1	4-2-0	5-4-0	3-0-1	2-2-0	
Pittsburgh	8	5	0	.615	362	319	4-2-0	4-3-0	7-3-0	1-2-0	3-2-0	
Baltimore	8	5	0	.615	356	255	4-2-0	4-3-0	4-5-0	4-0-0	2-3-0	
Cleveland	7	6	0	.538	276	270	4-3-0	3-3-0	4-6-0	3-0-0	2-2-0	
Denver	10	3	0	.769	385	293	7-0-0	3-3-0	8-1-0	2-2-0	4-0-0	
San Diego	8	5	0	.615	293	272	5-2-0	3-3-0	6-4-0	2-1-0	2-2-0	
Kansas City	7	6	0	.538	291	241	4-2-0	3-4-0	5-4-0	2-2-0	1-3-0	
Oakland	2	11	0	.154	200	350	2-5-0	0-6-0	1-8-0	1-3-0	1-3-0	

National Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	East	PF	PA	Home	Away	NFC	AFC	Div
Philadelphia	9	4	0	.692	389	309	6-1-0	3-3-0	5-4-0	4-0-0	3-0-0	
Dallas	9	4	0	.692	343	301	3-4-0	6-0-0	6-4-0	3-0-0	2-2-0	
N.Y. Giants	4	9	0	.308	293	326	2-4-0	2-5-0	2-7-0	2-2-0	1-3-0	
Washington	3	10	0	.231	244	346	2-4-0	1-6-0	1-8-0	2-2-0	1-2-0	
Atlanta	5	8	0	.385	328	342	3-3-0	2-5-0	5-5-0	0-3-0	4-0-0	
New Orleans	5	8	0	.385	333	359	3-4-0	2-4-0	4-4-0	1-3-0	2-2-0	
Carolina	4	8	1	.346	269	341	2-4-0	2-4-1	4-6-0	0-2-1	2-2-0	
Tampa Bay	2	11	0	.154	237	348	0-6-0	2-5-0	1-8-0	1-3-0	0-4-0	
Green Bay	10	3	0	.769	423	304	7-0-0	3-3-0	7-3-0	3-0-0	4-1-0	
Detroit	9	4	0	.692	265	224	6-1-0	3-3-0	7-2-0	2-2-0	3-0-0	
Minnesota	6	7	0	.462	263	281	4-3-0	2-4-0	5-5-0	1-2-0	0-4-0	
Chicago	5	8	0	.385	281	378	2-4-0	3-4-0	4-4-0	1-3-0	1-3-0	
Arizona	10	3	0	.769	275	238	7-0-0	3-3-0	7-2-0	3-1-0	2-1-0	
Seattle	9	4	0	.692	322	235	5-1-0	4-3-0	7-2-0	2-2-0	2-1-0	
San Francisco	7	6	0	.538	244	268	3-3-0	4-3-0	6-4-0	1-2-0	1-3-0	
St. Louis	6	7	0	.462	285	285	3-3-0	3-4-0	4-5-0	2-2-0	2-2-0	

REST OF THE SCHEDULE

 Oakland at Kansas City
 Washington at N.Y. Giants
 Jacksonville at Baltimore
 Green Bay at New England
 Tampa Bay at Carolina
 Cincinnati at Cleveland
 N.Y. Jets at Tennessee
Monday
 New Orleans at Chicago

NEXT WEEK

Thursday, Dec. 18
 Tennessee at Jacksonville
Saturday, Dec. 20
 Philadelphia at Washington
 San Diego at San Francisco
Sunday, Dec. 21
 Baltimore at Houston
 Detroit at Chicago
 Atlanta at New Orleans
 Minnesota at Miami
 Buffalo at Carolina
 Green Bay at Tampa Bay
 Kansas City at Pittsburgh
 New England at N.Y. Jets
 N.Y. Giants at St. Louis
 Buffalo at Oakland
 Indianapolis at Dallas
 Seattle at Arizona
Monday, Dec. 22
 Denver at Cincinnati

SPORTS



Tall order

Kansas City must win 2 of final 3 games to keep playoff hopes alive | **NFL, Page 62**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

ARMY ★ VS ★ NAVY

Cadets, Midshipmen
prepare for latest
chapter in a historic
rivalry, one built upon
tradition, loyalty, and
above all, respect

★ Page 57 ★

The contenders:

■ Mariota, Cooper, Gordon each have compelling Heisman case | Pages 59-61

